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THE ART OF WRITING ENGLISH

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THE ART OF WRITING ENGLISH

A MANUAL for STUDENTS: with CHAPTERS on PARAPHRASING, ESSAY-WRITING, PRÉCIS-WRITING, PUNCTUATION, and other MATTERS

By J. M. D. MEIKLEJOHN, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF THE THEORY, HISTORY, AND PRACTICE OF EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

The noblest literary study of an Englishman is the study of the English language. The noblest literary gain of the educated man is the power of wielding that language well.—THRING.

Omnia praeclara difficilia.

Things of the greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with care are, and with tears brought forth.
HERRICK.

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SIR GEORGE W. KEKEWICH

K.C.B.

SECRETARY TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PREFACE

This book has been written for the purpose of guiding the young student into the right path, and of saving him from wasting his time in exercises that are not only of no use to him, but are positive hindrances in the way of his learning to write good, clear, and firm English. The use of Analysis as a guide to Composition—as it is sometimes called—proves to be the veriest Slough of Despond, in which the student can neither swim nor walk. The writer has not worried his pupils with a large number of rules and meticulous directions, but has tried to set their feet in a plain path, has tried to show them the road to freedom and power—and perhaps even to delight in adequate and rhythmic expression.

Whatever utility may exist in this book is to be found chiefly in its exercises. These may seem to be too numerous. But it takes several years to master—or even to come near mastering—the violin or the piano: how many more years ought it to take to enable any writer to come within sight of the goal of mastering the complexities, the intricacies, the beauties, and the subtleties of the English tongue?

Again, when a young student is learning to write, he is also learning to think. In his unceasing quest for the right word, for the adequate and perfectly truthful

expression, he comes to many avenues in the wanderings of careful thought, and learns to choose between right and wrong. He is likewise on the way to possessing himself of some of the countless treasures of his mother-tongue; and, in both these respects, he is not unlike a great historical personage—Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom.

All the exercises are very short; and the Teacher is earnestly advised to discourage and even to forbid long dissertations and lengthy essays, which absorb too much of the Teacher's time, and promote in the Pupil habits of verbosity and loose writing. A short exercise of ten lines, carefully and thoroughly polished, will do more for the pupil than a wordy 'essay' of as many pages. Once he has been shown the way, it is the Pupil who ought to do the polishing, and not the Teacher.

Some of the exercises and material of this book have been recovered from some other books of mine, which are now out of print.

I am also indebted to Professors NICHOL and MINTO; to MÄTZNER, LANSON, Dr. PROBST, Professor STRAUB; and other French and German writers.

☞ It is not at all necessary that the young student should work through all the exercises; he should select those that seem to be most useful for his own stage of development.

☞ Correcting exercises is the bane of the Teacher's profession. It paralyses his mental powers, and granulates the fibre of his brain. It is recommended that all exercises be short; that they be read aloud in Class; that, as a rule, they should be corrected there; that questions be put on them and answers demanded; that questions and criticisms from the class be invited; and that the correction of exercises be made an occasion for lively social discussion.

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Prologue

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

A FAMILIAR TALK ABOUT THE WRITING OF ENGLISH

(with some Suggestions and a little Advice)

A YOUNG student wishes to be able to write good English, to express his thoughts in clear and fitting language, in neat and well-turned sentences. How is he to set about it? He naturally goes to his Teacher and consults with him.

His Teacher tells him that he cherishes a most praiseworthy desire, that it is of great importance to be able to use one's mother-tongue rightly, and that his mother-tongue—English—is probably the richest language in Europe, that is, that it contains the largest choice of words and phrases from which to select for the true and adequate expression of thought. 'Shall I read books about the "Art of Composition"?'—'Not at all,' replies the Teacher; 'at least, not in the meantime. These books will fill your mind with theories and principles. But you don't want any theory of writing; and you do not require what are called "principles of style." All you want for the present is practice in writing down your own sense in plain and clear English; and this practice you can have any day or every day.

'There is a well-known story about a French lady, who

was governess to the young sons of Louis XIV. One day she asked one of them—the Duc de Maine—to write a letter to his father. "Oh, I can't write letters," he replied; "I haven't the slightest idea how to write a letter!" —"Well," said the lady, "but you sometimes think about your father, I suppose."—"Oh yes!" said the boy; "I am very sorry that he has gone away."—"Very good, very good; then just write that down. But is that all you think about him? Have you nothing else to say?" —"Well, I should be very glad if he would come back." —"There 's your letter all ready made," replied the lady; "just put down these two thoughts of yours, give it a beginning and an ending; and the letter is done."—"Oh! I didn't know it was so very easy to write a letter; I thought one had to put down all sorts of big words and phrases, and to show that you know a lot of things that you really don't know."—"Nothing of the sort: all you have to do is to put into clear and simple words what you think or feel."'

All this is quite plain. But the young student will ask, 'How about the rules of GRAMMAR? Am I not obliged to take these with me, to keep them in mind, and to think about them while I am writing?' To this the teacher replies: 'Certainly not. Rules of grammar will only get in your way. You will be like a gentleman going for the first time to the Queen's Drawing-room: he puts on a sword for the first time, and he thinks so much about it that it gets between his legs and perhaps trips him up. In writing, your whole mind must be full of the subject you are writing about; and there must be no room for rules about this or that turn of language, this or that form of expression.'—'But then I shall go wrong, and write bad grammar.'—'That is possible; but you will of course read over what you have written, after you

have written it, and see that it contains no bad grammar or bad English. If it does, then of course you will correct it. But, while you are writing, keep your mind entirely fixed on the subject you are writing about.'

'Well, then, there is ANALYSIS: surely that is useful in composition—surely I shall get some guidance from that.'—'Worse and worse, my young friend, analysis will simply paralyse the movements of your mind and make any writing you produce as stiff as a poker.'—'But analysis tells us all about the build of sentences (about the anatomy of them), about co-ordinate and subordinate clauses, about complex and compound sentences, and so on. Now, as composition is merely the making of sentences, and every paragraph and every book is made up of large numbers of sentences, surely the part of grammar which tells you all about the nature of sentences must be extremely useful to you?'—'So it would seem; but so indeed it is not. Analysis is not only no help in the process of composition; it is the very greatest hindrance. What would you think of a person who, when ordering you to walk, told you that you must set in motion the crural muscles and the tibial muscles, and that you must not forget to make the *adductor* muscle act in combination with the *sartorial* muscle and the peroneus longus? Keep a look-out also on the action of the "extensor cruris particeps," and likewise on the "extensor digitorum communis longus!" Your own common-sense would tell you that all this is superfluous rubbish; and that, while it is useful to know the names of the chief muscles in the leg, such scientific knowledge is quite out of place in learning to walk. The human race learned to walk thousands of years before the names of these muscles were known; human beings learned to walk by seeing other people walk, and by trying it themselves.

Walking, talking, and writing are all quite easy: the one is as easy as the other, and every one of them is to be learned by practice. It is true I have seen books in which exercises like this were set: "Make three sentences in which there shall be one principal sentence, two subordinate, and two sub-subordinate clauses." Or like this: "Construct six sentences on this model: $A+b+c+d$." But the complete answer to all this is that no one, when left to his own nature and his own common-sense, ever does make sentences on these patterns, or on any pattern at all. He writes or talks about what he knows; and his words and phrases, all unconsciously, fall into line and marshal themselves in sentences. The fact is that the two processes of the mind, ANALYSIS and COMPOSITION, are exactly opposed to each other, and mutually exclusive. Analysis is the critical examination, the dissection of **what has been written**; composition is the production of thoughts or feelings in words. Analysis is critical; composition is creative. Composition is a form of life; analysis is a kind of dissection. If you keep your mind intent on the construction of your sentences, **while** you are writing them, you will find analysis a great hindrance both to thought and to expression.'

'Well, you surprise me,' replies the student. 'I thought that, when I was learning grammar and analysis, I was on the highroad to writing good English.'—'You were on the highroad to knowing what good English is; but the knowledge of grammar does not at all help you in turning out sentences, or stimulate you to write with vigour. The knowledge of grammar has rather a contrary tendency; it makes you fearful and cautious, it teaches you to be constantly on the watch lest you write bad grammar.'—'Then I suppose I must throw away my books on grammar and analysis, and

trust to myself to write good English.'—'By no means: your books on grammar and analysis are all very well in their own place and at their own time; but they are no guides in the practice of composition.'—'What are the guides, then?'—'The guides are good and lively writers—such as Macaulay, Froude, Kinglake, and others. When you find a passage in such writers that strikes your fancy and excites your feelings of admiration, then set to work, make a short abridgment of the passage, and lay it aside for a day or two. Then take out your paper and rewrite the passage from your own abridgment, imitating the author as closely as you can. Next, compare your own version with the original and note carefully in what parts—in what words or phrases—you have been deficient, and correct your own paper from the original. Do this two or three times a week; and you will soon be able to write excellent English—to write sentences that are neat, clear, and vigorous.'—'But this is only imitation; and some great thinkers say that nothing is to be gained by imitation but dulness and second-hand monotony.'—'It is true that, in Art, a copy of a fine picture is not of so great value as the original from which the copy is made; but, when a young man is learning, the best way for him to learn is to keep imitating the great Masters of the Art he is trying to study. This was the way Louis Stevenson learned to write English; and few writers of this century write brighter or finer or more exquisite English than he. When a student at Edinburgh, he would imitate passages from Macaulay for a month, then he would copy Froude; he did not omit to write even Carlylese for the same time; and thus, by what he called "sedulous aping," he acquired that power of expression which is to-day the admiration of all his readers. So, if you want an election-

cry, take the cry of "Imitate! Imitate! Imitate!" and you will come out all right.'—'Then,' replies the bewildered student, 'what is the use of books on composition at all? What is the good of this very book on composition that you have just put into my hand? Am I to follow this book or the good writers you have just mentioned?'—'Well, to be perfectly frank, the plan I have recommended—if pursued with perseverance and thoughtfulness—will do much more for you than all the books on composition ever written. Nay, I will go further and say: if the Teacher of a form were to begin the practice of composition as soon as the child was able to write, and ask him to write only two sentences a day—one, from memory, out of his reading-book, the other about what he has seen or done during the day, the child would get to write sentences just as naturally as he talks, and composition would cease to be a SUBJECT. It would be no more a SUBJECT than eating or breathing or running.'—'Well, this is all very well: but what of this book?'—'This book has been prepared to supply the deficiencies in your earlier education—or rather, to make up for the absence of that practice in writing English which is now necessary to every educated person. Hence there is practice in building sentences—the materials, like bricks for a house, being supplied; practice in varying statements or in expanding them; practice in the art of using words in their right and exact meaning (and this turns out to be a training in the art of thinking also); practice in making précis; practice in paraphrasing, and so on.'—'Paraphrasing! Come, tell us something about that. We have heard that it is a somewhat unprofitable exercise—perhaps even entirely useless.'—'Well, no, it is not quite useless. It gives the writer practice in the art of drawing on his stock of words and phrases; and unless he

uses his stock, the young writer will find that it will diminish until the supply is almost gone, and the words that remain come slowly and unwillingly to the point of the pen. Practice—exercise—movement—these are the conditions of all life; and unless what we possess is used, it will not grow, it will dwindle. "Greater need draws better deed," to quote an old proverb.'—'Still, you must admit that it is slightly stupid (and sometimes stupefying) to change good poetry into bad prose, to take a passage from a great author, who understood the art of choosing and of employing words, and turn it into poor and feeble English.'—'From that point of view, you are quite right; but there is a distinct utility in paraphrasing. In the first place, by it you prove to your Teacher and to yourself that you fully understand the passage you paraphrase; in the second place, you put in circulation your stock of words and promote the growth of your vocabulary.'—'Yes, I see that; but are there not dangers in paraphrasing that one needs to be cautioned against?'—'Certainly, there are some dangers. But the greatest danger of all is what may be called **literalness**. This leads the writer to turn the verse he has to paraphrase not only into prose, but into a prose that is both prosy and prosaic. In other words the young student has not paraphrased in the spirit of the original, but has brought down the sense of his author to a lower plane—has, in fact vulgarised the sense. There is a well-known instance given by M. Arnold, where a young student was asked to translate into other English the famous line in "Macbeth":—

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

He turned this simple line into:—

> "Canst thou not wait upon a lunatic?"

Here is another example which was sent me the other day. In "The Lady of the Lake" Fitzjames says, looking down on his dead horse:—

> "I little thought, when first thy rein
> I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
> That Highland eagle e'er should feed
> On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!"

The last couplet was faithfully—too "faithfully"—rendered, "That eagles of Scotland would ever make their dinner off your quick legs, my dear horse!" Here "fidelity" becomes literalness of the most prosaic kind.' —'How is this literalness to be avoided?'—'Well, in all translating, the translations must be made in the **spirit** of the original. If you are paraphrasing Milton, you must paraphrase in a style not too terribly unworthy of Milton; if you are paraphrasing Tennyson, you must make your own prose not too distant from the noble language and fine rhythm of the original. To succeed in this, it is necessary to read the original carefully and sympathetically; next to read it aloud once or twice—with as much feeling and eloquence as is possible to you; and then try to seize the thought of each part of the passage, and give that thought in your own words.'—'And we must always write good English?'—'Yes, your paper should read, in so far as that is possible, like an original composition, and be both intelligible and pleasant to those who had never seen the original. Of course you must avoid poetic words and phrases, and also poetic combinations of words. You must not say "evening-lighted," or "incense-pillowed," or "moon-led," or "smooth-lipped," or "thought-rapt," or any words like these. They are all right in poetry—in their own place; in prose they are inadmissible.'

'What should we aim at in learning to write English,

what should be our chief aim in the study of composition?'—'Two things; and only two things: **clearness** and **neatness**.[1] These two qualities of style any person of average brains can achieve, with moderate diligence and thoughtfulness. If you have in you the power of eloquence or of picturesque writing, it is sure to come out. But, if you labour to be eloquent or picturesque, the result will most probably be affectation or futility.'—'But surely any one can write clearly and neatly: it seems to be quite natural.'—'It is not so easy as you think to write in a clear and neat style. Now-a-days everybody is so hurried; he takes an interest in so many things; he has to pass so many examinations; he reads so many magazines and newspapers, that he is always in danger of enlisting permanently in the crowded ranks of "THE MUDDLEHEADED." And then you perhaps produce something like this:—

"Oliver Cromwell was a man with an iron will and a large red nose, but under it were deeply religious feelings. He fought the battle of Worcester on the anniversary of his death."

Or this:—

"The Wars of the Roses were brought about by Henry v. of Battenberg, who was not a correct descendant to the throne."

Or this short Life of Oliver Cromwell:—

"Cromwell was brought up in Cambridge, then famous for its manufactured goods. As regards personal appearance, he was not prepossessing. On the contrary, he would in these advanced times be even styled ugly. The brow was massive and the perceptive bumps were well developed. Cromwell's last days were embittered by a book which threatened to kill him."

[1] As regards these two qualities, composition may be compared with handwriting. A sensible person writes clearly, out of respect for the person or persons who have to read his writing; and he writes neatly, out of respect for himself.

The following account of the Crusades does not show either clear thinking or neat expression :—

"The Crusades were an attempt to rescue the Ark of the Covenant from the Turks. They were a band of missionaries and were greatly insulted by the Moslems. But the Crusades didn't care. Peter the Hermit went about preaching the gospel the same as ever, and was successful in getting some of the people converted. Richard was the third Crusade. He was imbibed with a rage for crusading. Richard's character cannot be very well described, he being so little at home."

But perhaps the following reaches the highest point of "mixed" thought and information :—

"Sir Thomas More was an Irishman. He was also a great lyrical poet. He soon gave up poetry, however, and went into the army. Shortly after he won the great battle of Corunna in the Peninsular war. He was killed while walking about the deck with all his medals on ; but he did not die ere he knew that he had won the great victory of Trafalgar."

These brilliant young writers come from schools of all classes ; but all of them forgot or never seemed to have heard of Thackeray's simple advice to be perfectly certain of what they mean, and then to say it as plainly as possible. They tried at more than they could seize ; and to grasp more than they could hold.'—'Yes, I see ; and so they got hopelessly mixed.'

'I will give you only one more piece of advice. If you know French, translate from a good French prose writer a short paragraph once or twice a week. Good French prose is the best prose in the world. With a little practice in translating from it, your own prose will get something of the lightness and brightness, the vigour and the spring of the original.'

Introduction

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

1. **What is Composition?**—The writing of English is commonly called **Composition**; and there are two prevalent errors regarding its character which meet us at the very threshold. The first error is the idea that Composition is to be learned by grammatical rules, and that it has to follow the study of Grammar—and not precede it. Now Composition is a constructive, or creative, or synthetic act; and it is to be learned partly by doing it and partly by imitating the doings of other people in it. The study of Grammar, on the other hand, is a series of critical, examinatory or analytic acts of the mind; and its relation to Composition is that of a mere corrective. Grammar is to Composition what medicine is to food. Grammar may come in as a corrective after the composition has been produced; but it is not an inspiring power which aids in the production. The second error is the idea that Composition is an artificial process. It is true that it is not quite so natural as speech; but that is simply because the pen intervenes between the thought and the expression, and the moving of the pen is certainly a more artificial act than mere speaking. But, if we consider Composition as the living expression of living thought, we shall see that it is just as 'natural' as speech itself. Speaking and writing—

writing down what you have spoken—are not two different activities of the mind; they are fundamentally one.

(i) The constructive force shuts out the analytical; the analytical force shuts out the constructive.

(ii) It follows from the above considerations that all written composition should be preceded by oral composition. The young writer should be invited, first of all, to state, slowly, clearly, and consecutively, what he is going to write down.

(iii) Composition is on the same level of artificiality that cooking is. It is more 'natural' for the human animal to eat his food raw; but, in the present state of human civilisation, the application of fire, though quite 'artificial,' is just as natural and as necessary as the process of mastication.

(iv) The idea that Composition is artificial, and the fact that we postpone the teaching of it till very late, gives rise to the vulgar belief that it is a 'subject,' like French, or Latin, or History. But Composition is not a 'subject.' It is a quite ordinary practice—a very general activity; but it is a practice which, if pursued lovingly, with skill and intelligence, may blossom into an art. If it is not a 'subject,' oral composition ought to be begun as soon as the pupil can read, and written composition as soon as the pupil can write. In fact, writing and speaking are simply two forms of one mental act—the act of expression; and the art of expression itself is 'Nature' and natural.

(v) . . . Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean; so, o'er that art,
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes. . . . This is an art
Which does mend Nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is Nature.

WINTER'S TALE, iv. 4, 89.

(vi) A rule commonly given is, 'Write as you would speak.' But this advice must be taken with a grain of allowance. None of us speak in the finished and elaborate style in which we are obliged to write; if we did, we should be terrible bores. But there is no doubt that a pleasant and sensible way of speaking is a help to a pleasant and sensible style.

2. The Conditions of Good Composition.—The conditions of good composition are: (i) a full mind; (ii) a clear perception of the relative weight and value of each part of the subject; (iii) a clear understanding of the relations to each other of each part of the subject; (iv) the power of writing a clear sentence; and (v) the power of writing a rhythmical sentence. If we wish to train ourselves to write good English, we ought (i) to read slowly and leisurely the best and most vigorous writers; (ii) to form perfectly clear conceptions of what they say; (iii) to practise writing frequently; and (iv) to polish slowly and carefully what we have written.

(i) A great French critic—who was also a great writer—says that 'the chief aim in style ought to be absolute precision. There is only one noun that can express your idea, only one verb that can set that idea in motion, and only one adjective that is the proper epithet for that noun.' The great writer was Flaubert; and Flaubert sometimes laboured for a whole day to find the true epithet that he wanted. Unhappily, we have not time for that in England.

(ii) If, instead of finding for ourselves the words that will precisely and exactly and truly express our ideas, we simply adopt the words and phrases of other writers, we are like a man who goes to the slop-dealer for a suit of clothes, instead of being properly fitted by an intelligent clothier. Ready-made clothes fit everybody; and nobody.

(iii) The best way to gain the power of writing a rhythmical sentence is the constant study of the Authorised Version of the Bible. The best rhythms are to be found there; because that translation was made at a time when the English language had not been spoiled by the imitation of foreign rhythms, and because the English mind was at that time probably more full of deep, serious, and homely feeling than it ever was before or has been since.

(iv) Mr. Ruskin says: 'My mother forced me, by steady, daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the Book, but much of my general power of taking pains, and *the best part of my taste in Literature.*'

3. **How to Learn it.**—If we wish to learn swimming, we set to work and try to swim; if we wish to learn the art of skating, we buy a pair of skates, fasten them on, and set to work as best we may. In both cases we require a few directions; but, after we have understood these, the work must be done by ourselves, and we must learn by and from our own mistakes and blunders, as well as by our own successes. In the same way, if we wish to learn to write English, we can only do so by writing it. And it is just as easy to write English as it is to speak English. The one thing is as 'natural' as the other. Only, when some people take a pen in hand, they get into an artificial state of mind, they 'pose,' and they fancy that they must write down their own sense (if they have any) in a certain set form of phrase, and that this set form is as it were patented, and that no other form is allowable. They fancy that they must write 'by rule,'

just as they must obey a certain set of rules when they go to Court and make their bow to the Queen.

But this is not so. When we set to work to write—that is, to produce an exercise in 'English Composition,' we try to write our own sense, our own knowledge, and not the sense or opinions of other people. And, if we try to write our own sense, it is only fair that we should write it in our own way. It may be said, however, that there is only one way of writing good English. This is a mistake—it is an ancient superstition. There are many ways of writing down the same idea: one of them may be better than another, but all may be quite good. Of course, in studying and thinking over the art of Composition, we must try to learn what are the good, and the better, and the best ways; and, also of course, we shall aim at the best. It is to guide the young student in these paths that the present book has been written. When he has received this guidance, when he has learned these directions—and, indeed, while he is still learning them—he must practise the art of writing English.

4. **The Best Practice.**—The best way for a beginner to practise the art of writing English is to take a short passage—say of twelve to twenty lines—from a good author, like Macaulay, or Froude, or Kinglake, or R. L. Stevenson, read it carefully, make a short abridgment or 'skeleton' of it, lay that aside for a few days, and then rewrite the passage from his own abridgment. The next step is to compare what one has written with the original. The thoughtful student will very quickly note in what respects he has fallen beneath the original—in vigour, in clearness, in sequence, and in rhythm. He need not take too much trouble to note his errors. These will gradually fall away as he continues his

practice; the thing is to keep it up regularly, and to intensify one's attention on the excellences of the passage selected. The too careful noting of errors produces an anxious and self-conscious state of mind, which interferes greatly with natural vigour and natural grace.

(i) **After** the exercise has been written, the student should carefully examine each word and phrase, and see whether he cannot correct or improve them; but he should not think of this during the writing of it.

(ii) The **critical** state of mind is the exact opposite of the **creative** state. The latter should be full of vigour, go, and fire; the former is inspired by care, caution, and self-distrust. The two states of mind cannot co-exist at the same time without injury to or interfering with the rightful operations of each other.

(iii) The practice at first ought to be confined to historians and writers of narrative.

(iv) After the piece of composition has been written, we should turn out of each sentence every word that is redundant; shorten our phrases; and simplify as much as possible without destroying the rhythm of the sentence.

5. **Experience.**—Success in writing good English will be most easily and most completely achieved if, while we are engaged in this study, we also give some time to the reading of the best English writers. Insensibly, as we read on, we take into our minds expressive and forcible words and phrases; they become part and parcel of our own minds; they add to the strength of our minds and to the clearness of our thoughts; and they open up for us vistas into new worlds of beauty and imagination. Then these good writers, unconsciously to ourselves, influence our style and manner of writing; just as, if we mix in society that is thoughtful, gentle, and cheerful,

we unconsciously acquire the pleasant manners of that society. When we come to a passage in the author we are reading that seems to us finely or nobly or vigorously expressed, it is a good thing to read it again and again, and even to learn by heart some of the sentences.

(i) 'The man who writes well must learn to do so by example, if not by precept.'—MINTO.

(ii) Study the great masters in writing as in other arts.

(iii) Ben Jonson says: 'For a man to write well there are required three necessaries: to read the best authors, observe the best speakers, and much exercise of his own style. In style, to consider what ought to be written, and after what manner he must first think and excogitate his matter, then choose his words and examine the weight of either, then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words that the composition be comely; and to do this with diligence and often.'

(iv) 'No matter,' he goes on to say, 'how slow the style be at first, so it be laboured and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the first thoughts, or of the first words that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent.'

(v) So did the best writers in their beginnings. They did nothing rashly. They learned first to write well; and then custom made it easy and a habit. . . . So that the sum of all is:—ready writing means not good writing, but good writing brings on ready writing.'

6. **Preconditions of Writing** (i).—Before sitting down to write on a subject, we should have ascertained the facts connected with it as accurately as possible, have thought quietly about these facts, and perceived clearly their relations to each other. Our minds should be quite full of the subject before we begin to write about it. If

we have to look for words and search for phrases, then our mind is not yet in the right state for composition. Know the subject: the words will come! If we find, after writing the paper, that we have expressed ourselves vaguely or obscurely, or confusedly, then it will be found either that we have not got up the subject with sufficient fulness, or that we have written in a hurry without quiet meditation on what we proposed to ourselves to write about.

7. **Preconditions of Good Writing** (ii).—Before beginning to write, the student ought to have—either in his mind or upon paper—a clear **plan** of what he is going to write about. This plan ought to lie before the writer while he is at work. But he is not bound to adhere mechanically and unthinkingly to his plan. While he is writing, new thoughts will arise, new illustrations will suggest themselves to his mind, new developments of his idea will come forward; and he will therefore do what is right if he keeps modifying his short paper as he goes on. For, in all work of the mind, **life** should prevail and assert its power; and life refuses to be bound in by cast-iron rules or rigid plans. The plan ought to be a support and not a prison. The analogy is with the forms of dancing. In dancing the 'Lancers,' we keep to a set of rules, which all understand and all observe; but, within these rules, there is room for free grace and fitting variations on the usual play of limb.

8. **Style.**—In books on Composition and what is called Rhetoric, there is generally a good deal of discussion on style. This is not always of very much use. Style is manner; and every living person has his own manner, his own way of speaking, his own way of carrying himself, his own way of using his hands and his fingers. In the

same way, every one has his own style of composition. The style of a man is the outcome or result of all he has read or heard, and of all he has spoken or written. His experience has made him form certain habits; and these habits become more and more fixed, and at length form a style. Applied strictly to composition, it may be defined as the art of choosing the right words, putting these words into phrases and sentences. From this point of view, style is the form of thought. And this form may be neat or ugly, harmonious or crabbed, clear or obscure.

(i) The English word **style** comes from the Latin word **stilus**, which was the name of a kind of blunt-pointed bodkin used in writing. The Romans used wax tablets in writing; and on these tablets they wrote with the stilus. The other end of the stilus was flat; and, when an error in writing had been made, the flat end of the stilus was turned, and the wax smoothed over, ready to be written on again. Hence 'to correct,' was 'to turn the stilus' (vertere stilum).

(ii) **Style** meant at first simply mode of expression in speaking or in writing. Then it came to mean 'characteristic diction.' Thus we speak of 'the style of Shakespeare,' 'the style of Milton,' 'the style of Dickens.' All these mean simply the form of the diction (words and phrases) which are peculiar to or characteristic of Shakespeare, Milton, and Dickens.

(iii) 'Proper words in their proper places make the true definition of style.'—SWIFT.

(iv) STYLE is really the distinctive and vigorous expression in language of the man himself, of his intelligence as conditioned and influenced by his character and experience, and this experience includes the authors he has read and admired.

9. **Qualities of Style.**—A style may be old-fashioned

or modern, French or English, and so on. That is, style depends in a great measure on the habits of mind and the feelings of a people, and the writer of a book or the maker of a speech is influenced by the people he lives among and by the time in which he lives. But there are certain qualities of style which we expect to find in all writing. The chief of these are: **Neatness, Clearness,** and **Strength.** Neatness is opposed to clumsiness; Clearness to vagueness and obscurity; and Strength to looseness. If to these we are able to add **Grace,** so much the better. But that is a high quality that comes only after much study and long practice. **Neatness** forbids the use of inflated or pompous language; of slang words; of country dialects; of barbarisms of any kind. **Clearness** (or Perspicuity) forbids the use of too many words (verbosity); of round-about diction; and of ill-arranged phrases. **Strength** forbids vagueness, looseness, vapidity, dulness.

(i) **Clearness** may also be called **Perspicuity** or **Lucidity.** It might also be called **Transparency.** That is, the language used enables us to see clearly the idea through it.

(ii) 'Perspicuity consists in the using of proper terms for the ideas or thoughts which a man would have pass from his own mind into that of another.'—LOCKE.

(iii) Clearness consists to a large extent in the judicious use and management of adjectives. Young writers generally use too strong adjectives; and too many of them. A language made up entirely of nouns and verbs would be without colour, without light and shade, without the fine nuances that go to make a pleasant and sympathetic style. We ought to choose our adjectives for use, not for ornament; and they should not be stuck on, but should grow naturally out of the matter we are discussing. Again, adjectives should never be tall or stilted. The following will never

do: 'An august and strenuous passion of thought clothed in purple of imperial speech.' Adjectives like 'strenuous,' 'intense,' 'weird,' 'poignant,' are too highly coloured; they look in a modest essay like over-dressed persons in a room.

(iv) It is probably worth noticing that the words, **clear, neat, pure, simple,** are not English (or Saxon) words at all: they are pure Latin.

(v) 'The excellence of the ancient writers does not consist in a trick that can be learned, but in a perfect adaptation of means to ends. The secret of the style of the great Greek and Roman authors is that it is the perfection of good sense. In the first place, they never use a word without a meaning, or a word which adds nothing to the meaning; they knew what they wanted to say, and their whole purpose was to say it with the highest degree of exactness and completeness, and bring it home to the mind with the greatest possible clearness and vividness. . . . The ancients were concise because of the extreme pains they took with their epithets: almost all moderns are prolix because they do not. The great ancients could express a thought so perfectly in a few words or sentences, that they did not need to add any more.'—JOHN STUART MILL.

10. **Idiomatic Writing.**—It is the very first duty of a writer to write idiomatically. An idiom is a phrase or mode of expression which is peculiar to our own language, and is not found in any other. Round such a phrase have grown associations of our own people, our own society, and our own homes that make it dear to us. Besides, it is plain that the English language ought to be written as an Englishman would write it, and not as a Frenchman or a German. A language does not consist of a set of cold signs, like 1, 2, 3, 4, but of groups of words and phrases that are warm with life, because they give expression to the feelings and emotions of human

beings. The words of a language are not impersonal signs, like the signs in algebra: they can and they often do glow with passion or burn with affection or with indignation. The idioms or peculiarities of a language are the very heart and innermost core of that language; and hence they are of the greatest value. We must not refine them away, under the mistaken idea that we are writing 'more elegant' English. Some writers on Composition set their faces against idiom, and teach young writers how to produce a colourless, sapless, and savourless style. We have, for example, the vigorous and sensible phrase, 'The better the day, the better the deed.' This, a well-known writer on Composition transmutes into, 'The day sanctifies the deed.' But this kind of sentence deprives the idea and the expression of all its virile force; it substitutes for the pithy statement a rather flat-footed and conventional expression. Take another example, 'The last to die will be Azrael, the angel of death.' It is proposed to alter this into, 'The last that will die.' The same writer proposes to change 'not a man to break his promise' into 'not a man that will break'; 'the first to swear allegiance' into 'the first that swore'; 'who is there to save him?' into 'who is there that will save him?' But the phrases, 'the last to die,' 'not the man to break,' 'the first to swear,' 'the man to save him,' are all curt and vigorous idioms beside which the expansions of them look tame and weak. Both expressions have the same meaning; but they have not the same force. 'I have no time to spare' is much more vigorous than 'I have no time that I can spare'—more vigorous partly because it conveys the same sense in fewer words. In the same way, 'A writer on medicine' is better than 'a person who writes on medicine,' or 'who writes on medical subjects'; 'this spirit, dumb to us,

will speak to him' is better—because more forcible—than 'though it is dumb to us.'

11. **Rhythm.**—It is of real importance that our sentences should have a pleasant flow and a well-modulated close. A sentence ought not only to be neat and clear, it ought also to have a pleasing rhythm. That is to say, it ought to be easy to read aloud. Indeed, this is one of the best tests of good composition. After we have written our paper—narrative, essay, or whatever it may be—we should read it aloud to ourselves and think how each sentence sounds. Still better to read it to some friend or acquaintance, if we can find any one to listen to it. For it must not be forgotten that **speaking** is just as much 'composition' as **writing**; and that the true standard and corrective of written composition—of what is called style—is spoken composition. We ought constantly to compare the one with the other. It is true that many a writer silently compares the sentences he is producing with the effect they make upon his 'inward ear'; but it is certain that, by reading them aloud, he will be able to discover a good many openings and opportunities for correction and for improvement.

'The law of euphony governs the sequence not only of words, but also of phrases.'—RALEIGH.

12. **Long and short sentences.**—It is important, for the purpose of sustaining the attention, to vary the length of a sentence, and to mix long sentences with short. The short sentences serve as a kind of resting-place. Let us take an example from Macaulay, who understands and practises this device constantly in his well-known History of England. He is speaking of Marshal Luxembourg, the general who was sent by Lewis XIV. to fight William III.

'In a short time he had disposed everything. The French army was in battle order. Conspicuous in that great army were the household troops of Lewis, the most renowned body of fighting men in Europe; and at their head appeared, glittering in lace and embroidery hastily thrown on and half fastened, a crowd of young princes and lords who had just been roused by the trumpet from their couches or their revels, and who had hastened to look death in the face with the gay and festive intrepidity characteristic of French gentlemen. . . . Meanwhile, Luxembourg had sent off a pressing message to summon Boufflers. But the message was needless. Boufflers had heard the firing, and, like a brave and intelligent captain, was already hastening towards the point from which the sound came.'

Froude is also fond of writing a succession of bright, light, easy, direct, short sentences; and their effect is always telling.

'The nationality of the Australian colonists is at present English; and, if they leave us, it will be by the action of Great Britain herself, not by any action of their own. To the question what political measures should be taken to preserve the union, they would answer generally, no measures at all, save in the better organisation of the navy. Let well alone. The ties which hold us together are daily strengthening of themselves. The trade of England with the colonies grows far more rapidly than with any other parts of the world. Intercourse is increasing. Melbourne and Sydney are as easy of access now as New York was fifty years ago. Steam and telegraph have made an end of distance.'

The Good Sentence

CHAPTER III

WHAT A GOOD SENTENCE IS

1. **Introductory.**—All language is spoken or written in sentences. The sentence is the mould into which all our thinking is run. Hence, when we come to write, we are compelled to write in sentences.

2. **General Rules.**—As our purpose in writing is to be easily and quickly understood, it is plain that there must be a few general rules to guide our practice. These rules are: (i) The sentence ought not to be overcrowded either with words or with ideas; (ii) the right words must be used; (iii) let the sentence have a pleasant rhythm.

(i) Another rule very usually given is: 'The sentence must have unity.' This means that we should speak or write of only one person or thing in the sentence; that we should not wander off to other subjects; and that the principal clause in the sentence should dominate and keep in their proper places all the subordinate clauses.

(ii) It is often necessary to ask the opinion of a friend as to whether this or that sentence is overcrowded. The writer already knows the meaning; to *him* it is all plain, and immediately plain; but the reader or hearer does not know what is coming, and has 'to take it in.' The hearer will be able to tell us, after he has heard our sentences, whether we have given to each the **feeling of unity.**

3. **Length of Sentences.**—It is important to vary the

length of our sentences. This avoids monotony, and gives the hearer or reader a rest now and then. Sometimes even a succession of short sentences is restful. As a general rule, it is well to sandwich a short sentence between two long ones; but, indeed, one is generally guided by the sense and by the necessities of each case.

4. **Specimen Sentences from Froude.**—Macaulay and Froude are two historians who combine great clearness with force and vigour in their sentences. They are excellent examples of a readable style.—The following paragraph is from Froude. He is describing the intense affection of the Irish for each other and for the land they were born on. He does not describe this affection in a vague and abstract fashion. No! he takes a very concrete example, gives us the numbers of children and the numbers of acres, and distributes the one among the other. He goes farther, and shows us that the Irish were in the habit of depending entirely on one kind of crop—with what fatal results all the world knows.

'The Irish are intensely affectionate. Father and children, brothers and sisters, cling to one another, and cling to the spot where they were born. A farmer with four-and-twenty acres and half-a-dozen boys, cut his acres into half-a-dozen divisions, and on a farm which would barely maintain one family in comfort and decency you had six families, all living on the eternal potato. . . .'

These three sentences gradually increase in length. Nothing can be more clear than the way in which the statements are put.

5. Let us take another from Froude's 'Short Studies' (II. 223). He is speaking of the power of concealment given by those long peninsulas—between long fiords—which are found in the west and south-west of Ireland, which

are or were covered with dense forest, and inaccessible except by the waterways of the bays and fiords. They were inhabited, if inhabited at all, by wolves and by men as wild as wolves. And he builds up all these details into one vivid picture.

'These glens and precipices had been the retreat of the last Earl of Desmond in the closing summer of his life. The long peninsula shut in between the fiords of Bantry and Kenmare was then covered from end to end with forest, inaccessible except by water, or penetrated by a few scarce discoverable horsetracks; inhabited by wolves, and by men who were almost as wild, and who were human only in the ineffable fidelity with which they concealed and shielded their hunted chief. . . .'

The first sentence in the above paragraph introduces the purpose of the next sentence very neatly. In the second sentence, the wild nature of the fiords and the wild character of the inhabitants complement each other and throw up the characteristics of both into strong prominence.

The next sentence conveys an argument. The suppressed premises are: warlike virtues are necessary to rule a country; those persons who have visited India tell us that the Bengalees have no warlike virtues. The cultivated Hindoos, however learned they may be, are quite incapable of governing India, if they were left to themselves. How does he put this statement? He compares the Hindoo with the Englishman as regards intellectual ability, and he finds that the former is superior; he compares the two as regards character and courage, and he finds that the proportion is: Hindoo : Englishman :: A Sheep : A Lion.

'Those who have formed their opinion on the spot, and not in England, tell us that the cultivated Bengalees, who

beat our own students in metaphysics and philosophy and mathematics, would have as much chance of governing India, if the arm that supports them were withdrawn, as a handful of tame sheep of ruling quietly over a nation of lions.'

The following paragraph gives a good specimen of vivid description, told in very short sentences. 'The sound should seem an echo to the sense'; and the brevity of the sentences here gives some idea of the breathlessness of the spectator.

'Even in South Africa I never saw such a display of celestial fireworks. The lightning was rose colour, deepening at times to crimson. Each flash appeared like a cross, a vertical line seeming to strike the earth, a second line crossing it horizontally. The air was a blaze of fire. The rain fell in such a deluge that the plain in a few minutes was like a lake. Of course we could not move. The horses stood shivering up to their fetlocks in water. At one time there was no interval between the flash and the report, so that we were in the very centre of the storm. The sense of utter helplessness prevented me from being nervous; I sat still and looked at it in mere amazement. In two hours it was over. . . .'

6. **Macaulay's Sentences.**—The following, from Macaulay's 'History of England,' is an excellent example of the spiritedness given by short sentences, especially in the description of a battle. Then, when the narrative comes to more peaceful scenes, it can afford to expand into longer sentences.

'. . . Carter was the first who broke the French line. He was struck by a splinter from one of his own yard-arms, and fell dying on the deck. He would not be carried below. He would not let go his sword. "Fight the ship," were his last words: "fight the ship as long as she can swim." The battle lasted till four in the afternoon. The

roar of the guns was distinctly heard more than twenty miles off by the army which was encamped on the coast of Normandy. During the earlier part of the day the wind was favourable to the French: they were opposed to only half of the allied fleet; and against that half they maintained the conflict with their usual courage and with more than their usual seamanship. . . .'

The description of Glencoe given in the next extract is remarkable for the power with which it gives the intensity of the solitude of that famous glen. More especially, the two sentences beginning 'Mile after mile' intensify the description by the catalogue of things and persons that *are not there.*

'. . . In the Gaelic tongue, Glencoe signifies the Glen of Weeping: and in truth that pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. Mists and storms brood over it through the greater part of the finest summer; and even on those rare days, when the sun is bright, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the impression made by the landscape is sad and awful. The path lies along a stream which issues from the most sullen and gloomy of mountain pools. Huge precipices of naked stone frown on both sides. Even in July the streaks of snow may often be discerned in the rifts near the summits. All down the sides of the crags heaps of ruin mark the headlong paths of the torrents. Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, or for one human form wrapped in a plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog, or the bleat of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten pinnacle of rock. The progress of civilisation, which has turned so many wastes into fields yellow with harvest or gay with apple blossoms, has only made Glencoe more desolate. . . .'

The following passage is a good example of the vivid realisation by Macaulay of all the circumstances of a case: the methods of hiding; the mode of disarming; the sudden transfiguration; the resumption of the original design.

'The English complained that it was no easy matter to catch a Rapparee. Sometimes, when he saw danger approaching, he lay down in the long grass of the bog; and then it was as difficult to find him as to find a hare sitting. Sometimes he sprang into a stream, and lay there, like an otter, with only his mouth and nostrils above the water. Nay, a whole gang of banditti would, in the twinkling of an eye, transform itself into a crowd of harmless labourers. Every man took his gun to pieces, hid the lock in his clothes, stuck a cork in the muzzle, stopped the touch hole with a quill, and threw the weapon into the next pond. Nothing was to be seen but a train of poor rustics who had not so much as a cudgel among them, and whose humble look and crouching walk seemed to show that their spirit was thoroughly broken to slavery. When the peril was over, when the signal was given, every man flew to the place where he had hid his arms; and soon the robbers were in full march towards some Protestant mansion. . . .'

7. **The Loose and the Periodic Sentence.**—The periodic sentence is formal in its character and somewhat slow and stately in its rhythm. The full meaning of such a sentence is kept back till the close, and the attention of the hearer or reader suspended. The opening sentence of Keats's HYPERION is a good example of a periodic sentence:—

> 'Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
> Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
> Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star,
> Sat grey-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone.'

If the sentence had begun, 'Grey-haired Saturn sat deep in the shade,' etc., it would have been an ordinary loose sentence.

8. **Examples of Bad Sentences.**—The object of writing a sentence is to convey one thought clearly. To effect this object it has already been stated that the sentence must not be overcrowded with words or with ideas. Further, it must have a pleasant and an easy rhythm which, by pleasing the ear, will the more readily enable the mind to grasp its meaning. Clearness and rhythm, then, are what we must look for. As an example of how a sentence should not be written, let us take the following passage from the opening paragraphs of Grote's 'History of Greece.' He is describing the mystical world of the Greeks.

'The first acts of what may be termed the great mystical cycle describe the proceedings of these gigantic agents—the crash and collision of certain terrific and overboiling forces, which are ultimately reduced to obedience, or chained up, or extinguished, under the more orderly government of Zeus, who supplants his less capable predecessors, and acquires presidence and supremacy over gods and men—subject, however, to certain social restraints from the chief gods and goddesses around him, as well as to the custom of occasionally convoking and consulting the divine assembly.'

The faults of this sentence are very obvious. In the first place, it is too long; secondly, it possesses no rhythm at all; and being so long and so unrhythmical, it wearies the attention of the reader, and makes it very hard for him, except with a considerable effort, to get hold of the meaning. One cannot see the wood for the trees. The effect of a long and unrhythmical sentence on the mind is very much the same as that produced on the voice by

dwelling too long on a note or phrase of music. Both get tired, and their powers are weakened. In this case it would have been much better, in point of style, to have divided this sentence into three, by a few trifling alterations and by putting full stops at 'agents' and at 'men.'

Take another sentence from Carlyle's 'Oliver Cromwell.'

'Another book of Noble's, called "Lives of the Regicides," written some years afterwards, during the French Jacobin time, is of a much more stupid character; nearly meaningless indeed; mere water bewitched; which no man need buy or read.'

Here the meaning is plain enough. But how harsh and jerky is the effect produced by the last three phrases! There is no flow or rhythm in them at all. Then, too, the rhyming cadence of 'meaningless indeed' and 'buy or read' is very clumsy. In writing prose, students should always beware of a rhyming jingle of words. Those who would write smooth flowing prose should avoid moulding their style on Carlyle's model. It is moderately easy to imitate his abrupt—almost gasping—style and to ape his mannerisms; but these things do not make for grace of composition.

Two other passages from Carlyle ('Cromwell's Letters') illustrate the abrupt awkwardness of the conclusion of his sentences:—

'This dark element, it is the mother of the lightnings and the splendours; it is very sane, this!'

'A Shadow, sunk deep in the Land of Shadows; yet still indisputably visible there: that is the miracle of him.'

Speaking generally, a sentence should not end with a monosyllable. In the passages quoted the endings 'this' and 'of him' are intolerably harsh.

9. Examples of highly Latinised English. — Our language is the English language; but some writers have tried to make it almost entirely Latin. It is true, as we have seen, that our language would have been infinitely poorer, had it not been for the additions it received from the Latin; but for quick, strong, forceful words, in times of grief, of anger, and of joy, it is to the pure English speech that one instinctively turns. It is not meant that the student should always laboriously select English in preference to Latin words—in that case the labour is apt to turn out an affectation, and the style becomes slipshod or flat-footed. The writer must use whatever words come most readily into his mind; but, when two words occur, and one is English and one Latin, rather use the English, if it bring out the proper shade of meaning.

Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' for example, shows us the strength and the tenderness of the pure English tongue. In the stanza—

> 'The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
> And hushed my deepest grief of all,
> When filled with tears that cannot fall,
> I brim with sorrow drowning song.'

there is but one Latin word—'moved.' Contrast this with the following passage from Dr. Johnson's 'Rambler' (No. 204):—

> 'All that could solace the sense, or flatter the fancy, all that industry could extort from nature, or wealth furnish to art, all that conquest could seize, or beneficence attract, was collected together, and every perception of delight was excited and gratified.'

Here nearly every important word, save 'wealth,' 'seize,' 'together,' and 'every,' is derived from the Latin; and the effect produced is dignified enough, but slightly

pompous. At the same time the sentence is beautifully balanced and rounded.

The speech of the unfortunate poet, Savage, when pleading for his own life and that of his fellow-prisoner, contained this passage (as quoted by Dr. Johnson):—

'But we are also persuaded, that as mere men, and out of this seat of rigorous justice, you are susceptive of the tender passions, and too humane not to commiserate our unhappy situation.'

Now Johnson quotes this speech 'as far as it could be retained in memory'; and it is more than probable that he has translated it into 'Johnsonese.' It is far more likely that Savage, who was on the point of being condemned to death, would have couched his appeal for mercy in more simple terms—as thus :—

'But we do feel most strongly that as mere men, and out of this seat of unswerving justice, your hearts cannot but be touched, and that, also as men, you are bound to feel the deepest pity for our wretched plight.'

A last appeal for mercy is not made in such sonorous Latin phrases as 'susceptive of tender passions'; in times like these the pleader instinctively uses the simple Saxon words. The student will therefore observe that in passages, which are intended to express pathos, tenderness, or appeal, it will be best for him, other things being equal, to use the homely English mother-tongue.

Consider the two following passages from Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote in the seventeenth century, and whose vocabulary is nearly all borrowed from the classical languages, especially Latin:—

'More circumspectly, not meticulously, and rather solicitous, than anxiously solicitudinous' (every word but four from the Latin).

'Lastly, we are not magisterial in opinions, nor have we dictator-like obtruded our conceptions; but, in the humility of enquiries or disquisitions, have only proposed them unto more ocular discerners.'

This being 'translated' into English, might run:—'Lastly, we do not, like a judge on the bench, or like a king from the throne, wish to force our opinions down any one's throat; but, in our humble search after truth, only set them before the notice of those that have eyes to see.'

The lesson, then, to be drawn from the foregoing extracts, is much as has been previously stated. Avoid long words, and do not make an excessive use of those that end in '-tion' and the like; but do not, at the same time, limit yourself in such a way as to cramp and ill-express your meaning, or destroy the balance and swing of your sentences.

Punctuation

CHAPTER IV

PUNCTUATION

1. **Punctuation** is the art of using certain marks called **points**, and of using the right points in the right places. The relation of the different parts of a sentence to one another is made plain to a hearer by proper pauses in reading aloud, and to one who reads with his eye by the use of the proper points. It is very difficult, almost impossible, to codify a set of rules for punctuation which shall keep the young writer from falling into error on every occasion. The build of sentences is so different; the relations of clauses to each other and to the principal clause so infinitely various; the logic and the feeling of each writer so dissimilar, that, in the most delicate cases, rules would lead the young writer as often wrong as right. The learner must be trained to rely on his own judgment—on the living judgment fortified by the living voice; and, in all cases, before attempting to punctuate, the sentence should be read aloud.

(i) There is a kind of logic in pointing; and it requires to be carefully thought over.

(ii) Every good writer has his own method of pointing. This is quite right; it is only necessary that he should be quite consistent.

2. **Four important points.**—The four most important points are the **comma**, the **semicolon**, the **colon**, and the **full stop** or **period**.

(i) There are others, the use of which, however, requires no teaching. After a question we put the ?—sign of interrogation—a little crooked thing that asks questions. After a statement like this, 'How awful is the responsibility of a Prime Minister!' we put the 'note of exclamation'—!

(ii) Then there are the parenthesis (which I had nearly forgotten, and which is not much used at the present day), and the dash — which is a very useful 'point,' if a point we can call it. A dash represents a pause considerably longer than that made by a comma.

'Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt.'—COWPER.

'Ah cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah glimmering water—
Fitful earth-murmur—
Dreaming woods!'—M. ARNOLD.

'His work well done—
His race well run—
His crown well won—
Here let him rest.'—MILLS.

(iii) Among points is sometimes classified the compound sign called 'inverted commas'—' ' or " " or quotation marks. These are chiefly employed to introduce a direct quotation. 'His father said to him: "I must ask you to be ready to start at six."'

3. **The Comma.**—The comma is used to mark to the ear a **distinct pause** in the sense. It has very many uses; but this is its strongest characteristic. Let us take a few examples of different kinds of employment of the comma.

(i) 'Mary, Queen of Scots, was executed at Fotheringay.' Here two commas are absolutely necessary to allow the hearer to ascertain which 'Mary' it was.

(ii) 'A mighty maze, yet not without a plan.' Here there are two distinct statements.

(iii) 'We see more of the world by travel, more of human nature by remaining at home.' In this sentence there are also two distinct statements.

(iv) 'If his jests are coarse, his arguments are strong.' Here the comma is demanded by the antithesis.

(v) 'Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood.'

Here the two commas might have been dispensed with; but the voice requires the pauses.

(vi) 'Thou canst not miss His praise; each tree, herb, flower,
Are shadows of His wisdom and His power.'
VAUGHAN.

Here the comma between 'tree, herb, flower' fulfils the function of **and**.

(vii) 'My son, give me thine heart.' Here there is a distinct and natural pause after 'My son.'

(viii) Commas are generally used before and after such words and phrases as 'at length,' 'at last,' 'however,' 'nay,' and such as 'To tell you truth,' 'To speak plainly,' 'To deal frankly with you,' etc.

4. **The Semicolon.**—The semicolon is a stronger stop than the comma. Its most general use is to mark off from each other **complete statements** which, for various reasons, the writer places in one sentence.

(i) 'Where crowds assembled I was sure to run,
Hear what was said, and muse on what was done;
No ships were wrecked upon that fatal beach,
But I could give the luckless tale of each.'—CRABBE.

Here there are two distinct statements joined in one sentence.

(ii) 'To the pure there is no taint;
Peril comes not nigh the brave;
Free man dreadeth no constraint;
Truthful living shuts the grave.'—MILLS.

In this sentence there are four statements.

(iii) 'Straws swim on the surface; but pearls lie at the bottom.' In this sentence there are two distinct statements.

5. **The Colon.**—The colon has several well-marked uses. (i) It introduces a new statement, without a conjunction. This new statement is generally in some sense explanatory of the first; or it amplifies and strengthens the first. (ii) It introduces (a) a formal speech, or (b) a catalogue of things.

(i) 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness.'—KEATS.

(ii a) 'Mr. Balfour rose and said: "I am glad to meet," etc.'—'And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud: "I will sleep no more!"'

(ii b) 'The following is a list of the books: Milton's Poems; Dryden's Works; etc. etc.'

6. **The Full Stop.**—This point is used to mark the close of a sentence. It shows that the construction of the sentence is quite complete.

(i) 'Is she not come? The messenger was sure.
Prop me upon the pillows once again—
Raise me, my Page: this cannot long endure.'
M. ARNOLD.

In the above quotation there are two sentences completely moulded; and each is closed by a full stop.

(ii) This point is also used for abbreviations. Thus:—

M.P. = Member of Parliament.
M.A. = Master of Arts.
T. P. Brown = Thomas Phillips Brown.
Esq. = Esquire.
Rev. = Reverend.
M. Arnold = Matthew Arnold.

(iii) The full stop is also used in certain contractions. Thus:—

i.e. = id est (=that is).
e.g. = exempli gratiâ (=for the sake of example).
viz. = videlicet (=to wit).
etc. = et cætera (=and the rest).

7. **Subordinate Marks.**—There is a much-used mark called a hyphen, which is employed to enable us to divide a word into syllables, one or more syllables being in one line and one or more being in the next line. The ordinary practice is to begin the new syllable with a consonant. But, while this is the practice among printers, it is as well for us also to have some regard to the true nature of the word—to its real root—to its etymology.

(i) Thus we find words divided in the following fashion: asto-nishment; impu-dence; fes-tivity; plea-sure; par-ticle; princi-pal. Now the root of the first word is **ton**; of the second **pud**; of the third **fest** (we cannot divide feast into feas-t); of the fourth is **pleas** (we cannot write plea-se); of the next **part**; and of the last **cip** (=cap.) Our ordinary method of dividing these words cuts the root right in half.

(ii) Some words cannot be divided at all; and the printer is hereby earnestly requested to leave them quite whole either in the one line or in the other. Thus **eighteen** is not =**eigh**+**teen**; because there is no such word as **eigh**. Nor is it=**eight**+**een**, because the ending **een** as a numeral does not exist. The only way out of the difficulty is not to divide

the word at all. A similar difficulty exists in the case of the word beginning: we cannot divide it into **beginn** and **ing**, nor into **begin** and **ning**.

8. **The Apostrophe.**—This mark (') is used to show that a letter or letters have been left out. Thus we put **e'en** for even; **don't** for do not, and so on.

(i) Other examples are **'tis**, for it is; **ta'en**, for taken; **tho'**, though; **Edinboro'** for Edinburgh; and so on.

(ii) This gives the true meaning of the statement: The apostrophe (') is 'the sign of the possessive case.' The old possessive in most English nouns ended in **es**; the printers thought it as well to use the ' merely as a mark of elision; and thus it came to be called 'the sign of the possessive case.' In the same way the printers of the eighteenth century always printed **hop'd**, **walk'd**, for hoped, walked, etc. See Addison's Essays, passim.

Exercises in Punctuation

Punctuate the following passages. If it should be possible to punctuate at any particular place in two or more different ways, give a reason for the special point you adopt.

Good people all with one accord
Lament for Madam Blaize
Who never wanted a good word
From those who spoke her praise

GOLDSMITH

The foolish neighbours come and go
And tease her till the day draws by
At night she weeps How vain am I
How should he love a thing so low

TENNYSON

By strangers left upon a lonely shore
Unknown unhonoured was the friendless dead
For child to weep or widow to deplore
There never came to his unburied head
All from his dreary habitation fled

CAMPBELL

Beside a lake their cottage stood
Not small like ours a peaceful flood
But one of mighty size and strange
That rough or smooth is full of change
And stirring in its bed

WORDSWORTH

And this was all the religion he had
To treat his engine well
Never be passed on the river
To mind the pilot's bell
And if ever the *Prairie Belle* took fire
A thousand times he swore
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore

COLONEL JOHN HAY

The traveller footsore feverish and satiated with glacier and precipice lies back in the corner of the diligence perceiving little more than that the road is winding and hilly and the country through which it passes cultivated and tame RUSKIN—FRONDES AGRESTES

All great men not only know their business but usually know that they know it and are not only right in their main opinions but they usually know that they are right in them only they do not think much of themselves on that account RUSKIN—FRONDES AGRESTES

And ever at the sacred gates sat Mercy pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and suffering ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenward in intercession for the sins of mankind

and such blessed influences were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts that even the poor outcasts of society the debtor the felon and the outlaw gathered round the walls as the sick men sought the shadow of the apostles and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand till their sins were washed from off their souls

FROUDE—SHORT STUDIES

The circumstances which give a peculiar character to the slaughter of Glencoe the breach of faith the breach of hospitality the twelve days of feigned friendship and conviviality of morning calls of social meals of health-drinking of card-playing were not mentioned by the Edinburgh correspondent of the 'Paris Gazette' and we may therefore confidently infer that those circumstances were as yet unknown even to inquisitive and busy malecontents residing in the Scottish capital within a hundred miles of the spot where the deed had been done MACAULAY

Friendship may be said to require natures so rare and costly each so well tempered and so happily adapted and withal so circumstanced for even in that particular a poet says love demands that the parties be altogether paired that its satisfaction can very seldom be assured

EMERSON'S ESSAYS

One day Amelia had a headache and could not go upon some party of pleasure to which the two young people were invited Nothing could induce her friend to go without her What you who have shown the poor orphan what happiness and love are for the first time in her life quit you never and the green eyes looked up to Heaven and filled with tears

THACKERAY—VANITY FAIR

When he dropped Claverhouse asked in an unconcerned tone of voice How came the fellow here Speak you staring fool he added addressing the nearest dragoon unless you would have me think you such a poltroon as to fear a dying man SCOTT—OLD MORTALITY

Variation and Expansion

CHAPTER V

VARIATION AND EXPANSION

'Oh, reason not the need! The barest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous.'
Lear, II. 4, 268.

THESE were the words uttered by the despairing King Lear, when his heartless and disloyal daughters pointed out to him in turn that he could manage to exist with a much smaller number of followers than he had. And the lesson we can extract from the above exclamation is that that English style is not a good one which expresses its meaning in the baldest and fewest words, which looks upon a sentence as Euclid looks upon a line—as 'the shortest distance between two points.' The true symbol of a sentence is not a straight line, but a curve—that is, the line of beauty. A sentence must have a flow, a rhythm; but flow and rhythm go in beautiful curves: they are not like the straight line described by a bullet from a gun when it is fired point-blank at an object near. Archbishop Whately says the same thing from a different point of view, and employs a different image to illustrate his meaning. He says: 'It is remarked by anatomists that the nutritive quality is not the only requisite in food,—that a certain degree of distention of the stomach is required to enable it to act with its full powers; and that it is for this reason that hay or straw must be given to horses, as well as

corn, in order to supply the necessary bulk. Something analogous to this takes place with respect to the generality of minds, which are incapable of thoroughly digesting and assimilating what is presented to them, however clearly, in a small compass.'

This recommendation, however, to use a certain number of words—to avoid using too few, is not a recommendation to be verbose—to use too many. That is a great error. Platform orators, members of Parliament, clergymen, are often guilty of this error; and they pour out words in great abundance, in the hope that they may light upon the exact word or the right phrase that will truly express their meaning—that will hit their thought. The two styles are neatly described in a well-known saying of Charles James Fox. He was one night talking of a great speech made by his rival and opponent William Pitt, and he said, 'I can find words, but Mr. Pitt always finds *the* word.'

It is not, indeed, always necessary, in writing a story or an essay, to be extremely brief. We must have some regard to the flow or rhythm or sound of a sentence; and we must also give our readers time to put the ideas we are expressing into their heads. It is often advisable, moreover, to present the same idea to the reader at different angles. It is not necessary to imitate or to cultivate the curtness of a telegram. It is likewise a good thing to vary the length and the build of our sentences, so that the repetition of the same kind of rhythm may not pall upon the reader, and at length disgust him.

For the purpose of varying the build of our sentences, it is well that we should practise VARIATIONS. That is, we should practise varying our phrases, lengthening them, shortening them, or in some way changing them, so as

to make them fit more neatly into the sentence we are making. Thus, instead of 'a learned man' we could say 'a man of learning,' 'a man of considerable learning,' 'a man of great learning,' and so on. For example, suppose we write the sentence: 'All present agreed that Mr. Parr was a very learned man.' This is a good enough sentence; but it might have a pleasanter fall at the close if we said 'that Mr. Parr was a man of great learning.' Again, let us turn the sentence: 'Mr. Pitt was most unwilling to increase the public burdens.' This sentence is too curt and blunt: it does not read well. It would have a much pleasanter sound if we said: 'Mr. Pitt was most unwilling to increase the burdens already borne by the public.' Once more, the sentence: 'The taking of the Dargai position was a difficult and dangerous exploit.' This is a good, firm sentence; but it wants swing and go. If we translate the two adjectives into adjectival phrases, the sentence will read much better: 'The taking of the Dargai position was an exploit of the most difficult character, and surrounded with dangers of every kind.'

It may, from some points of view, be at times advisable or even necessary for us to expand our words and phrases into more words and longer phrases. This expansion should, of course, only be done **during revision**; the mind should not be allowed to dwell on it during the process of writing, the mind must be filled, and entirely filled, with the subject on which it is writing. There are two purposes for which this expansion may be desirable: the one to give greater **fulness of expression** to the meaning; the other to ensure a better and a pleasanter **rhythm**. For example, let us take the sentence: 'My uncle told us some interesting stories.' After producing this short sentence, the writer might come to see that the chief weight of emphasis lay upon the word **interesting**; and

that this emphasis is not brought out with sufficient fulness by the employment of the single adjective. He therefore proceeds to expand this word. And he may do it in several ways:—

(a) My uncle told us some stories that were very interesting.

(b) My uncle told us some stories that held our attention all the time he was speaking.

(c) My uncle told us some stories of a most interesting character.

Again, suppose we had written the sentence, 'Nelson won for himself great fame.' This sentence is written in a curt and stunted style; it lacks rhythm. It ends, moreover, in two long syllables—**great fame**—the sound of which is unpleasantly similar. We can get rid of this fault by variation and expansion. We can rewrite the sentence in various forms:—

(i) Nelson won for himself a fame that spread throughout the civilised world.

(ii) Nelson won for himself a fame that raised him to the head of his profession.

(iii) Nelson, by his dauntless courage, unsleeping watchfulness, and unparalleled skill, won for himself a fame that will never die.

Let us take two more examples. 'Raleigh was sent to the Tower and kept there for thirteen years.' The three long syllables—**and kept there**—sound a little flat, and want ease. We might substitute for them, 'and kept in that stronghold,' or 'and confined in that prison,' or 'and kept prisoner there,' etc. etc. 'Tom won the race easily.' It is plain that the important—the emphatic—word here is **easily**. It is advisable that, if the context requires it, the idea of ease should be thrown into greater

prominence. In that case, we might substitute for 'easily'—'with ease,' 'with the greatest ease,' 'with no difficulty,' 'without the smallest strain,' 'with little effort,' and so on.

In the following exercises, the student must take care not to mix up questions of **grammar** with his alteration, variation, or expansion of the sentences he is called upon to improve. He is not asked to turn an **adjective** into an adjectival phrase or clause; he is not required to turn an **adverb** into an adverbial phrase, or a **noun** into a noun-clause. These considerations are matters of grammar, which are quite out of place in the art of composition. What he is asked to do is to improve or alter each sentence, so as either (i) to bring out the meaning more clearly or more fully, or (ii) to improve the flow or rhythm of the sentence.

In working the following exercises on **Variation**, care must be taken not to spoil the turn of the sentence from a mere desire to vary or make some change upon it. The variation or change we make must be good English—must be at least as good as the original form of the sentence. Suppose, for example, we are called upon to make a variation on the proverb, 'Delay is dangerous,' it will not do to change it into, 'It is dangerous that one should delay.' A form like 'that one should delay' for 'delay' is stiff, clumsy, and one that no educated person would use. No one ever spoke like this; and, if we find it in books at all, it is only as a kind of extreme grammatical example. Take another instance: 'It becomes a monarch to be merciful.' This is a quite good sentence, brief and pithy. But if, for the mere sake of varying it, we alter it into, 'It becomes a monarch that he should be merciful,' we alter it into a clumsy monstrosity.

Shakespeare, in the 'Merchant of Venice,' makes

Gratiano say to Antonio, 'In truth, I know not why you are so sad.' In varying this, it would never do to say, 'I do not know the cause of your sadness,' because it takes away from the easy colloquial air of Gratiano's talk, and makes the statement look like an extract from a scientific work. Again, the simple expression, 'I do not know where they live,' is good enough for any kind of composition; but to alter it into, 'I do not know the place of their residence,' is to write in a very stiff, unusual, and pedantic fashion. 'There was no danger of his being betrayed' is a good and clear sentence. To change it into, 'There was no danger that he would be betrayed,' is to alter it for the worse, to make it both stiff and clumsy. In the same way, to change 'A wise man' into 'A man possessing wisdom,' or 'A difficult task' into 'A task involving difficulty,' is to write phrases such as no really good English author ever used or ever thought of using.

Ex. 1.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type in the following sentences:—

1. **Brevity** is the soul of wit. 2. His recovery was now **beyond hope.** 3. Mr. B. cared nothing for **popular** opinion.

4. 'Tis pleasant sure, to see one's name **in print,**
A book's a book, altho' there's nothing in't.

5. **Inoffensive** laughter can never be personal. 6. The conspirators arranged **a secret** meeting. 7. The cargo of the ship was **very valuable.** 8. The general, **sensible** of the importance of the enemy's position, advanced to attack it.

Ex. 2.—Alter or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. Human powers are **limited**; man's desires are **boundless.** 2. Men **sunk in misery** are **ready** for crime. 3. The admiral was an **old** man. 4. The general, **spirited but injudicious,** proposed a night attack. 5. His conduct at

school was **far from exemplary.** 6. The Moscow Expedition was a **terribly severe** campaign. 7. The family much preferred **obscurity.** 8. The **extent of the damage** was never ascertained.

Ex. 3.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type:—

1. The **deposition** of Richard II. was considered **absolutely necessary.** 2. The **source** of the Nile was unknown **for ages.** 3. The manager could only **guess at the cause** of the fire. 4. No one knows to whom the papal crown **will pass.** 5. Katharine, with **wifely** pride and **queenly** scorn, declined to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Cardinals. 6. **Public** burdens weigh heavy on the **Italians.** 7. **Faithful** to his promise, he marched his troops to the point **agreed on.** 8. Time, the **destroyer** as well as the **creator,** changes the face of cities.

Ex. 4.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type:—

1. These are goods **of our own manufacture.** 2. The objects of **his pursuit** were many and various. 3. Othello, **at the request of** Desdemona, recounted his adventures and battles.

4. Here, **under leave** of Brutus and the rest,
Come I to speak **in** Cæsar's funeral.

5. He nodded **disapprovingly.** 6. The rain was **unusually** heavy: it was **more than tropical.** 7. The business is **hopelessly** bankrupt. 8. The cruelty of the king proved him to be a **pitiless** man.

Ex. 5.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type:—

1. The Prime Minister did not explain his **intentions** on the subject. 2. He asked too large a compensation for **his sufferings.** 3. State **support** involves, and must involve, **state** control. 4. **Time** tries all. 5. I have seldom heard more **encouraging** news. 6. The king feared a **general**

rebellion. 7. This spirit, **dumb** to us, will speak to **him.** 8. The verdict was **unquestionably** right.

Ex. 6.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type:—

1. These rights have been ours from time **immemorial.** 2. **Man's** feeble race what ills await! 3. The family **accordingly** quitted their cottage. 4. A few **inaudible** words seemed to pass between him and the captain. 5. I am ready to wait for any **reasonable** time. 6. The total value was **immeasurably** greater. 7. They pronounced him one of the best fellows **in the world.** 8. The **beamless** sun set red in the frosty sky.

Ex. 7.—Alter or expand the words in **dark** type:—

1. **Trained** to arms, the whole population was ready for war. 2. The people **took** me for a commercial traveller. 3. The table was **entirely** occupied by the electric machine. 4. The shelves were fitted up for the **abiding** places of birds and reptiles. 5. The ploughman **homeward** plods his weary way. 6. The orator spoke **with the greatest vigour.** 7. Be silent, **on your lives!** 8. He acted **very carelessly.**

Ex. 8.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. He could not live in **so noisy** a street. 2. The difficulties **attending** the project were **far from slight.** 3. **Exceeding** peace had made Ben Adhem bold. 4. While receiving your friends **within,** and amusing them **without,** you lead a **good, pleasant, bustling** life of it! 5. His employer **held a high opinion** of his ability. 6. **The crooked** shall be made straight. 7. **The future** may perhaps atone for **the past.** 8. Small pity had he for **the young and fair.**

Ex. 9.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. **Planned merely,** 'tis a common felony; **accomplished,** an immortal undertaking. 2. While Cook is loved for **savage** lives he saved, so Cortez **odious** for a world **enslaved.** 3. Great conquerors greater glory gain by foes **in triumph**

led than slain. 4. People often fight without any mischief done. 5. The story was tediously spun out. 6. I like a judicious critic to point out the defects in my writing. 7. What makes all physical or moral ill? There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.

Ex. 10.—Expand or alter the words in dark type:—

1. Her father squandered his fortune in every conceivable discreditable way. 2. Hence arose first coldness, then jealousy, then a quarrel. 3. Lady B. is going to have the honour and glory of producing the new lioness in fashionable society. 4. The grounds were a tangled desolation. 5. I momentarily expect him here. 6. The goods were carried off clandestinely. 7. Creditors have better memories than debtors.

Ex. 11.—Expand or alter the words in dark type:—

1. How little gold deserves a thought! 2. Industry is human exertion of any kind employed for the creation of value. 3. Great or bright infers not excellence. 4. Lord Coningsby and Mr. Stanhope were the principal interrogators. 5. It is the cloaked embodied Justice that sits in Westminster Hall. 6. Mr. Hallam wrote a critical and argumentative history. 7. The sun of March was shining brightly. (Recast the whole sentence.) 8. The lofty rocks were covered by the prodigal verdure and the countless flowers of the closing May.

Ex. 12.—Expand or alter the words in dark type:—

1. No mortal can bear half the keenness of thy sharp envy. 2. Every Orsini slain is a robber the less. 3. As one disarmed, his anger all he lost. 4. Let them know of what a monarchy you are the head. 5. It was a very low fire on such a bitter night. 6. Many a carol, old and saintly, sang the minstrels and the waits. 7. My son, thou hast spoken as a patriot and a Christian. 8. Repeated errors alienated a loyal gentry from the House of Stuart.

Ex. 13.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. He was a man who never had a taste, or emotion, or enjoyment, but **what was sordid and foul.** (Recast the whole sentence.) 2. Some one had told him that learning was better than **house and land.** 3. Bliss is the same **in subject** or **in king.** 4. Freedom's battle, once begun, tho' **baffled oft,** is ever won. 5. The narrow path of duty is **securest.** 6. All his neighbours praise him **for an honest man.** 7. **His memory** long will live alone in all our hearts. 8. Have your **town palaces** a hall **like this**?

Ex. 14.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. **Save that he is one-eyed,** he is like anybody else. 2. He rushed off **precipitately.** 3. This straw hat suits you **admirably.** 3. Neither prayers nor threats **prevailed** over his resolution. 4. The laws of a country have **no passion of their own.** 5. **On the strength** of that recommendation, he was sent to school. 6. The better part of **valour** is **discretion.** 7. As her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. (Recast the whole sentence.) 8. A quiet conscience makes one so **serene.**

Ex. 15.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. Edward **speedily** rallied to his standard the fighting men of Chester. 2. The fish-woman screamed **her loudest.** 3. Every historian has expatiated **with a sentiment of exultation** on the power of her foreign masters. 4. Of all my friends you are the **only one** I esteem. 5. If you have formed no other and **inseparable** attachment, I should like to offer you some advice. 6. Very few people are good **economists of their fortune.** 7. And now, **without any further preface,** let us proceed. 8. It was a home destitute **of everything elegant,** almost of **everything convenient.**

Ex. 16.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. Edward had now **abundant scope** for the exercise of his

abilities **as a soldier**. 2. He had such strength of soul **as never saddens in adversity**. 3. He entered **with a healthy zest** into the pastimes of youth. 4. The campaign was fought on a plan **only dimly discernible** to the officers and privates. 5. Kent and Sussex were then **thinly peopled** and **partially cultivated**. 6. The work is **inexcusably** bad. 7. Bolingbroke determined to claim his **paternal estates**. 8. He worked on **in the hope of succeeding**; but in vain.

Ex. 17.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. The centre of the army fell **impetuously** on the enemy. 2. No victory could be **more decisive**. 3. He was a **ready** orator, an **elegant** poet, an **excellent** cook, and a **most contemptible** sovereign. 4. Insurrection, **never so necessary**, is a most **sad necessity**. 5. The **desperatest** may be the wisest course. He stabbed him with a wound **instantaneously mortal**. 7. He is a **jewel of a man**. 8. He would spend no more money in **trips to Scotland**.

Ex. 18.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. Scott made no absolute claim **to originality**. 2. The bystanders seemed to take **much interest** in the sport. 3. It was not only a constraint upon the child's mind, but even upon the natural grace and freedom of her action. (Recast the whole sentence.) 4. It was an outrage upon **humanity** and **decency**. 5. He was wont to communicate his pleasure to **those around him** in an abrupt and stern fashion. 6. Reason's **whole pleasure**, all the **joys of sense**, lie in three words—health, peace, and competence. 7. **Ardent** and **intrepid** on the field of battle, Monmouth was **everywhere else effeminate** and **irresolute**. 8. He gave them a **sumptuous banquet**.

Ex. 19.—Expand or alter the words in **dark** type:—

1. He was a man of a melancholy and dreamy mood, which forced him **ever and anon** into solitude. 2. He scorned to make love to any woman of a family not so

illustrious as his own. 3. Scotland is united to England, not **merely** by **legal bonds**, but by **indissoluble** ties of interest and affection. 4. Children **of prosperity** wisely try to hide the **full glow of their splendour**. 5. **Johnsons** are rare; yet, as has been asserted, **Boswells** perhaps still rarer.

Ex. 20.—Vary or expand the phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The leaders in the newspapers are no guide to the temper **of the nation**. 2. **Man's** powers are not unlimited. 3. The sentence **of the judge** declared that his head should be cut off, and afterwards exposed to public view. 4. Several officers **of distinction** fell in the skirmish. 5. It seemed to be the **general** opinion that there had been severity **enough** in the Netherlands **for the present**. 6. I have always thought Mr. A. to be a person **of good sense**.

Ex. 21.—Vary or expand the phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The prisoner's meat and drink should be **daily** drugged, so that he might die **by little and little**. 2. The king showed a tranquil sense of enjoyment which, to us, seems almost **incredible**. 3. The doctors thought her recovery **beyond hope**. 4. The nobles of Spain were **without spirit** and **without intelligence**. 5. The officer had been provided with a letter **of instruction**. 6. The king decided in favour of a **private** execution within the walls of the fortress. 7. The admiral was a man **much advanced in years**.

Ex. 22.—Vary or expand the phrases in **dark** type:—

1. Many tribes **hitherto given to the worship of idols** were converted by our missionary enterprise. 2. The governor of the jail arranged the **mode**, the **day**, and the **hour** of the execution. 3. It was believed that he had died a **natural** death. 4. The general withstood the attack of an army **greatly outnumbering** his own troops. 5. It was the language of a man **seriously ill**. 6. The prisoner made vehement protestations **of innocence**. 7. The executioner was accompanied by the **prescribed** individuals.

Ex. 23.—Vary or expand the phrases in **dark** type:—

1. No one could guess the **dark** deed **then** and **there accomplished.** 2. His burial was conducted **very respectably.** 3. The **baron's** estates were sold. 4. The sovereign gave vent to his **royal** indignation in a **marginal** note. 5. The officer had to start for the Soudan on **three days'** notice. 6. **Another** and a **more terrible** misfortune fell upon the Netherlands. 7. A **continued** and **violent** gale had **long** been sweeping the Atlantic waters into the North Sea. 8. Dort and other cities were, **for a time, almost** submerged.

Ex. 24.—Vary or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The laws they obeyed were at least laws **of their own framing.** 2. The destruction of life and of property was enormous throughout the **maritime** provinces. 3. Thousands of human beings were swept **out of existence** in a few hours. 4. Villages, farms, and churches were **entirely** engulfed. 5. **Collecting** insects was one of the favourite objects **of his pursuit.** 6. Every article which could **serve as a boat** was **eagerly** seized upon. 7. Nature seemed disposed to **put to the blush** the feeble cruelty of man.

Ex. 25.—Vary or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The castle commanded the **whole** navigation of the waters. 2. The Queen, **on the advice** of the Duke of Wellington, dismissed her ministers. 3. The Scottish army, **under** General Leslie, faced the troops **of** Cromwell. 4. The colonel, **with complete self-confidence,** attacked the fort. 5. The doctor, **at my request,** promised to examine him. 6. The two invalids, **on the advice** of Dr. D., spent a month at Aix. 7. The last conspirator, **in fear of discovery,** revealed the names of his companions.

Ex. 26.—Vary or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The Prince of Orange, **though again a wanderer**, had never allowed himself to despair. 2. Every one praised the skill **displayed by the painter**. 3. Thrown **for the time** out of his **legitimate** employment, he **naturally** turned his eyes to the battles **of freedom** in a **neighbouring** land. 4. The plan of action **agreed upon** was disclosed **soon after** to the government. 5. Long and anxious were the conversations **held between** the parliamentarians and the royalists. 6. The public, **silently** and **sorrowfully** looking on, sympathised with the royal victim.

Ex. 27.—Vary or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The canker of rebellion was corroding the **very heart** of the Netherlands. 2. The general, **having conquered** in the first engagement, moved forward his troops **as rapidly as possible**. 3. The bridge **spanning the river** is a **noble** construction. 4. The interviews **on the subject** of the invasion were only **intended to deceive**. 5. The Prince's work was to destroy the tyranny **which had grown colossal**. 6. The regiment lying in Namur was **much** liked by the inhabitants.

Ex. 28.—Vary or expand the words and phrases in **dark** type:—

1. The Prince issued commissions, **in his capacity of sovereign**, to various **seafaring** persons to cruise against **Spanish** commerce. 2. The 'beggars of the sea,' as these privateers called themselves, **soon** acquired **a terrible** name. 3. **Thus pressed**, the Princes unwillingly yielded. 4. No man who had ever been **punished of justice** was to be admitted into the crews. 5. **Relying on this assurance**, the doctor **somewhat grudgingly** permitted the invalid to travel. 6. The infantry, advancing like a solid body, met every charge **firmly**.

Idiomatic Phrases

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH IDIOMATIC PHRASES

'I propose to teach a young scholar to go, not to dance.'—ASCHAM.

THERE is in our language a considerable number of words, which, when combined with nouns, prepositions, or adverbs, change their meaning in the most surprising manner, and appear to bid good-bye to the original signification which they once bore. Such combinations, indeed, form phrases which are in very current use, and which root themselves in English as permanent idioms. They are the despair of the foreigner, who finds that logic and ordinary reasoning are no guide at all to the meaning of them. Take, for example, the simple verb **make**, and let us see what curious changes of meaning and function so simple a word can undergo when combined with other words. We can 'make a bow,' or 'make a figure,' and we can 'make war'; a clever fellow by dint of hard work 'makes his mark'; another persevering person 'makes his way' through all kinds of difficulties; a ship 'makes head' against a strong gale; the lazy schoolboy with much trouble 'makes out' the meaning of a sentence in Cæsar; a benevolent uncle 'makes over' a part of his fortune to a deserving nephew; a ship 'makes land' as she gets into port; a thief 'makes free' with other people's property; a spendthrift finds it difficult to 'make both ends meet'; he goes to his father, and 'makes a clean breast of it'; his creditors have in the

meanwhile 'made a clean sweep' of his belongings; and he is obliged to 'make up his mind' to emigrate to South Africa or to West Australia.

Not only verbs, but adjectives and nouns, form these striking combinations. Moreover, almost all of the combinations are made with words that are purely English. The French and Latin words in our tongue do not seem to have been able to form relationships so close and so intimate. It is good practice for the young student to work up these idiomatic phrases into sentences; and this will not only increase the extent and the vigour of his vocabulary, it will accustom him to the use of words and phrases that are part of the innermost core of our language.

The following exercises are drawn up for this purpose.

Ex. 1.—Arm. Work up the following phrases into sentences: Bear arms; to be in arms; under arms; take arms; arms of precision.

Ex. 2.—Back. Make sentences in which the following phrases are employed: Answer back; pay back; beat back; hang back. Break the back of; turn the back on.

Ex. 3.—Bad. Make sentences with the following phrases: Bad blood; bad temper; bad conscience; bad coin; bad debts; bad health; bad form; bad odour.

Ex. 4.—Bear. Work the following phrases into sentences: Bear a meaning; bear a name; bear inquiry; bear a hand; bear in mind; bear date. Bear up; bear out; bear with.

Ex. 5.—Best. Make sentences which contain the following phrases: At best; best foot foremost; for the best. Make the best of; best informed.

Ex. 6.—Book. Work the following phrases into sentences: Balance book; bring to book; suit one's book. Speak by the book (or card); in one's good books.

Ex. 7.—Break. Use the following phrases in sentences: Break away: break in; break forth; break off; break out; break down; break up; break loose; break through.

Ex. 8.—And so with the following: Break a blockade; break a lance: break away; break bulk; break cover; break ground; break step; break the bank; break the ice.

Ex. 9.—Breach. Make sentences with the following phrases: Breach of charity; breach of duty; breach of faith; breach of the peace; breach of promise.

Ex. 10.—Call. Make sentences containing the following phrases: Call back; call for; call on; call off; call out; call over; call the roll; call to account; call to mind.

Ex. 11.—Carry. Insert the following phrases into sentences: Carry on; carry away; carry off; carry out; carry through. Carry matters with a high hand; carry a fortress; carry a seat in parliament; carry coals to Newcastle; carry one's bat.

Ex. 12.—Cast. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Cast about; cast away; cast forth; cast out; cast up. Cast in one's lot with; cast in the teeth of.

Ex. 13.—Charge. Make sentences with the following phrases: Charge against; charge at; charge on; charge with. Charge a gun; charge an oven; charge the mind; charge a jury.

Ex. 14.—Clean. Work the following phrases into sentences: A clean copy; a clean job; a clean bill of health; clean hands; make a clean breast of; make a clean sweep of.

Ex. 15.—Clear. Work the following phrases into sentences: Clear away; clear off; clear out; clear up. Clear a hedge; clear a rock; clear a ship; clear for action; clear the way.

Ex. 16.—Come. Make sentences containing the following phrases: Come about; come across; come at; come by; come on; come up; come down with; come in for.

Ex. 17.—And so with the following: Come to want; come of age; come short of; come to blows; come to nothing; come to oneself; come to the front; come up to the mark.

Ex. 18.—Cool. Make sentences with the following phrases: Cool airs; cool dews; cool shade; cool reason; cool temper; a cool hand; cool as a cucumber.

Ex. 19.—Crowd. Work the following phrases into sentences: Crowd about; crowd out; crowd with; crowd upon. Crowd to death; crowd a hall; crowd sail.

Ex. 20.—Cut. Make sentences with the following phrases: Cut across; cut down; cut into; cut off; cut out; cut up; cut short. Cut corn; cut hay; cut a drain.

Ex. 21.—And so with the following: Cut the army; cut an old friend; cut to the heart; cut a caper; cut a dash; cut a figure; cut off with a shilling; cut the knot.

Ex. 22.—Day. Make sentences which shall contain the following phrases: Bygone days; dark days; high days; day of doom; red-letter day; settling-day. The day is ours; to name the day; carry the day.

Ex. 23.—Deep. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Deep darkness; deep insight; deep silence; deep schemes. Deep in thought; deep in figures.

Ex. 24.—Do. Insert the following phrases in sentences: Do away; do away with; do for; do without; to have done with; do to death. Do business; do errands; do duty; do mischief; do a cathedral.

Ex. 25.—Draw. Make sentences with the following phrases: Draw away; draw down; draw in; draw off; draw on; draw out; draw up. Draw rein; draw the sword.

Ex. 26.—And so with the following: Draw the long bow; draw supplies; draw lightning from the clouds. Draw a long face; draw money; draw a cheque; draw twenty feet of water; draw to a head.

Ex. 27.—DRIVE. Work the following phrases into sentences: Drive at; drive away; drive on; drive into; drive off. Drive a coach; drive a mill; drive a nail; drive a business; drive a bargain; drive to the wall.

Ex. 28.—DROP. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Drop away; drop down; drop in; drop off; drop out. Drop anchor; drop a controversy; drop an acquaintance; drop a line; drop the curtain. A dropping fire.

Ex. 29.—EAR. Make sentences with the following phrases: Lend an ear; give ear to; meet the ear. All ears; over head and ears; set by the ears.

Ex. 30.—EAT. Work the following phrases into sentences: Eat away; eat into; eat out; eat up; eat out of house and home. Eat humble-pie; eat one's heart; eat one's words.

Ex. 31.—END. Make sentences with the following phrases: In the end; to the bitter end; at a loose end; the chief end; the latter end; the ends of the earth. Burn the candle at both ends; the end justifies the means.

Ex. 32.—EVEN. Insert the following phrases in sentences: Even justice; an even bargain; an even chance; evenly even; even or odd. To get even with.

Ex. 33.—EVER. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Ever and anon; ever in one; ever so; for ever; for ever and a day; or ever.

Ex. 34.—EYE. Work the following phrases into sentences: Have in one's eye; with an eye to; keep an eye on; in the wind's eye; in the mind's eye; the eye of the master.

Ex. 35.—Face. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Face to face; fly in the face of; set his face against; put a good face on; have the face to; with any face.

Ex. 36.—Fair. Use the following phrases in sentences: Fair dealing; a fair wind; fair fame; his fair name; a fair field and no favour; a fair aim; fair and square.

Ex. 37.—Fall. Make sentences with the following phrases: The fall of the leaf; the fall of the year; the fall of the wind. A fall in prices; a fall in stocks. To try a fall.

Ex. 38.—Far. Work the following phrases into sentences: Far away; far and away; far different; the far future; far-reaching dangers: a far cry. In so far as.

Ex. 39.—Feather. Use the following phrases in sentences: Birds of a feather; in full feather; in high feather; the white feather. To feather an oar; feather his nest.

Ex. 40.—Fellow. Work into sentences the following words and phrases: A fellow-citizen; a fellow-clerk; a fellow-creature; a fellow-passenger; a fellow-pilgrim; a fellow-student; a fellow-traveller. He has no fellow; the right hand of fellowship.

Ex. 41.—Field. Insert the following words and phrases in sentences: A bleaching-field; an ice-field; the field of research; the field of science; the field of operations. Clear the field: keep the field. The field is lost; the field is won.

Ex. 42.—Fill. Use the following phrases in sentences: Fill in; fill out; fill up. Fill a cavity; fill the chair; fill an office; fill time. Weep one's fill; take one's fill.

Ex. 43.—Finger. Work the following phrases into sentences: To burn one's fingers; to finger money; a finger in the pie; the finger of God; at one's finger ends. His fingers are all thumbs.

Ex. 44.—Fire. Make sentences with the following phrases: Fire a town; fire a mine; strike fire; take fire; heap coals of fire on. A dropping fire; a cross fire; the line of fire.

Ex. 45.—Fling. Insert the following phrases in sentences: Fling off; fling out; fling up; fling open. Fling a ship on the rocks; fling themselves on the enemy; fling away from; take his fling; in full fling.

Ex. 46.—Float. Make sentences with the following phrases: Float about; float on; float in; float a ship; float timber. Float land. Float a company; float a scheme.

Ex. 47.—Fly. Make sentences with the following phrases: Fly at; fly about; fly off; fly out; fly to; fly up. Fly in the face of; make the fur fly; come off with flying colours; as the crow flies. A flying column.

Ex. 48.—Fool. Work the following phrases into sentences: Fool away; fool with; play the fool; make a fool of. A fool's errand; a fool's paradise; fool-hardy; a foolish figure.

Ex. 49.—Foot. Make sentences which shall contain the following phrases: On foot; set on foot; foot it; to know the length of a man's foot; to fall on one's feet. On the footing of; a friendly footing.

Ex. 50.—Free. Work the following phrases into sentences: Free of; free from; free with. To set free; to make so free as; free to range over. Free course; a free library; a free passage; a free translation.

Ex. 51.—Friend. Make sentences with the following phrases: A friend of; a friend to; a friend at court. His next friend; to befriend; to be friends with. Friendless; a friendly breeze.

Ex. 52.—Full. Make sentences in which the following phrases shall be included: Full of; a full charge; a full house; a full list; the full term; a full cousin; in full blast; in full cry.

Ex. 53.—Go. Work up the following phrases into sentences: Go abroad; go ahead; go back on; go by the board; go for nothing. Go hard; go against the grain; go through with; go without; go halves.

Ex. 54.—Get. Make sentences including the following phrases: Get off; get on; get up; get at; get behind; get over. Get the better of; get rid of; get wind of.

Ex. 55.—Hang. Use the following phrases in sentences: Hang back; hang on; hang together; hang up.

At a meeting of the American Revolutionists, a member said to Dr. Franklin: 'You know, Franklin, we must all hang together in this matter.' 'Certainly,' replied Dr. Franklin, 'or we shall assuredly all hang separately!'

Ex. 56.—Hold. Include the following phrases in sentences: Hold forth; hold in; hold out; hold on; hold over; hold together; hold up; hold with.

Ex. 57.—Make. Use the following phrases in sentences: Make away; make after; make from; make for (peace, or righteousness); make out; make over; make up; make off with; make head against.

Ex. 58.—And so with the following: Make a clean sweep of; make a bow; make land; make a figure; make his mark; make his way; make both ends meet.

Ex. 59.—Meet. Make sentences with the following phrases: Meet his views; meet his approval; meet his eye; meet expectations; meet opposition; meet a friend.

Ex. 60.—Out. Make sentences with the following phrases: Out and away; out and out; out of date; out of one's head; out of joint; out of funds.

Ex. 61.—Pass. Make sentences into which are worked the following phrases: Pass by; pass on; pass off; pass over; pass one's word; pass muster; pass an examination.

Ex. 62.—Pay. Work up the following phrases into sentences: Pay down; pay up; pay off; pay on; pay for; pay off old scores; pay in his own coin; pay the debt of nature.

Ex. 63.—Play. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Play up; play off; play on; play with. Play ducks and drakes with; play into the hands of; play with edged tools; play second fiddle.

Ex. 64.—Put. Introduce the following phrases into sentences: Put away; put by; put down; put off; hard put to it. Put a stop to; put in mind; put one's best foot foremost; put a hand to; put to rights.

Ex. 65.—Ride. Work up the following phrases into sentences: Ride hard; ride out; ride over; ride roughshod. Ride a hobby; ride the marches; ride the high horse. Ride and tie.

Ex. 66.—Run. Make sentences with the following phrases: Run across; run after; run against; run amuck; run counter to; run down; run out. Run in debt; run riot; run a risk; run to seed; run a blockade.

Ex. 67.—Set. Work the following phrases into sentences: Set against; set aside; set down; set forth; set off; set up; set on foot. Set at ease; set at liberty; set by the ears; set in order; set on foot; set one's hand to.

Ex. 68.—Stand. Make sentences with the following phrases: Stand by; stand off; stand for; stand from under. Stand fire; stand one's ground; stand to reason.

Ex. 69.—Take. Work the following phrases into sentences: Take aback; take amiss; take in; take off; take out; take up; take up with; take upon one.

Ex. 70.—And so with the following: Take counsel; take earth; take heart; take heed; take hold; take leave; take pains; take part in; take to heart; take by storm.

Ex. 71.—THINK. Make sentences containing the following phrases: Think out; think good; think long; think little of; think no more of; think scorn of.

Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

CHAPTER VII

THE IDIOMATIC USE OF PREPOSITIONS AND OTHER CONNECTIVES

THERE are many nice peculiarities and idiomatic usages in the employment of prepositions. For example, it is sometimes puzzling to know when to employ **by**, or **with**, or **for**. 'I am much obliged by your kind thought' is a good sentence; but some persons would say **obliged for**. We cannot say that a church is ornamented **by** the statues of kings and queens; we ought to say **with**. We all say 'His opinion differs entirely from mine.' But, though we say **differs from**, when we come to use the adjective, most people would both say and write **different to**.[1] Similarly, we ought, in conformity with the derivation of the word, to say **averse from**; but we generally say **averse to**. And these phrases **different to** and **averse to** have struck their roots so deep into the soil of our language, that it is probable they will last as long as the language itself. Again, there is sometimes a little doubt as to when one must use **at** or **in**. 'We arrived **at** Chester before dark'; but it is necessary to say 'We arrived **in** Italy in December.' We can say 'He lives at Bath'; but we cannot say 'He lives at London.' The reason seems to be that London is so large and populous that it comes under the same rule as a country like Denmark, Scotland,[2] or Germany. The preposition **of**

[1] This use is, however, generally avoided by careful writers.

[2] London has a population one-half as large again as the whole of Scotland.

has the oddest and quaintest uses. It was once used to mark time; and our ancestors used to say 'They come here now and then of an evening.' The same usage is found in the phrase, ten **o'clock** (=ten strokes of the clock). But we also say 'Stripped **of** his honours'; 'We are thinking **of** going to Switzerland'; 'He made a fool **of** himself'; 'They made a great success **of** their idea.' It is easy to understand the phrase 'A man **of** strong will'; but it is not so easy to see the grammatical truth of such phrases as 'The county **of** Kent,' 'The city **of** Paris,' 'A blockhead **of** a boy,' 'The title **of** general,' when we should, in strict accordance with grammar, expect 'The county Kent,' 'The title colonel,' etc. Again, **on** and **of** are used with the same adjective; and we have the phrases 'Dependent **on**' and 'Independent **of**.' In much the same way, the preposition **for** may have inconsistent and even self-contradictory meanings. We can say 'He paid a hundred pounds **for** the horse,' when **for** denotes equivalence; and we can also say '**For** all his wealth, he is not a happy man,' when **for** denotes opposition. Again we use such phrases as 'Fit **for** food'; 'The sun will not rise **for** an hour'; 'Imprisoned **for** life'; 'Imprisoned **for** stealing'; and so on. A young man can live **with** his father; fight **with** a robber; can part **with** his friend; can regard a proposal **with** disapprobation; and can also be popular **with** his constituents. Similarly, we can ring the changes on the preposition **on**. We can say he lives **on** his means; **on** his uncle; **on** moderate terms; he spoke **on** home-politics for an hour, etc. The idiomatic use of **by** is also very peculiar. We can say '**by** little and little,' '**by** thousands,' and also '**by** himself.'

From these examples we can see that there are idiomatic usages of prepositions in our language which it is imperative on us to follow. The following exercises are

intended to give practice in the right use of prepositions.

Ex. 1.—Make sentences containing the following phrases: Abide by (a decision); accord with; admit of (an excuse); admit into (a society); agree with (his opinion); agree to (a proposal).

Ex. 2.—Write sentences with the following phrases: Arrival in (England); arrival at (Dover); aversion to (business); accompanied by; accountable for; authority on (a subject).

Ex. 3.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: A charge of (murder); to charge with (treason); to connive at; careful of (money); careful about (health); cognisant of.

Ex. 4.—Make sentences to contain the following phrases: Disagree with (a person); disagree about; doubt of; deficient in; dislike of; disgusted with; disqualified for.

Ex. 5.—Write sentences which shall contain the following phrases: Embark on (a ship); embark in (an enterprise); enter upon (a career); exchange for; exchange with (a friend); eager for (an opportunity).

Ex. 6.—Make sentences containing the following phrases: Fail in (an attempt); familiar with (a town); fruitful in (devices); fall on (the enemy); fall into (error); fall under (reproof).

Ex. 7.—Make sentences containing the following phrases: Gain on (an opponent in a race); get at (facts); get to (a town); glance at (a subject); glance over (a paragraph); grow on or upon (said of a habit); goodwill to; goodness to.

Ex. 8.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Influence over; influence with; interest in; impatient with (a person); impatient of (a proceeding); indebted to; indebted in.

Ex. 9.—Make sentences which shall contain the following phrases: Impose on; inquire into; intrude on; invest in; independent of; inspired with.

Ex. 10.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Labour under (a mistake); labour in (a cause); labour at (a piece of work); liable to (error); live by (labour); live in (fear of); look after (a piece of business).

Ex. 11.—Write sentences with the following phrases: Loyal to (a leader); likeness to; liking for; hankering after; make for (righteousness); make out of.

Ex. 12.—Make sentences containing the following phrases: March with (=border on); moved to (tears); moved by (entreaties); match for (another person); negligent of (duty); originate with (a person).

Ex. 13.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Pass for (an able man); pass by; perish by (fire); perish with (cold); popular with; preferable to.

Ex. 14.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Pride in: to pride oneself on; profuse in (offers); pursuant to; prevail on; prevail against.

Ex. 15.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Proof of; proof against; quick at; reckon on (a coming event); reckon with (another person); rejoice at.

Ex. 16.—Make sentences containing the following phrases: Repose (confidence) in; result from; result in; run into (danger); run through (money); ready for (action).

Ex. 17.—Write sentences containing the following phrases. Reconciled to (a statement); reconciled with (an adversary); responsible to (an employer); responsible for (a debt); rest on; rest with.

Ex. 18.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Readiness in (reply); reflections on (character); regard for; reputation for; rupture with (an old friend); rupture between (two nations).

Ex. 19.—Make sentences containing the following sentences: See about; see into; see through; satisfied of (the truth of a statement); secure against (attack); sensible of (kindness).

Ex. 20.—Write sentences containing the following sentences: Search for; search after; sneer at; sick of (hope); suitable for; smile at; smile on (a proposal).

Ex. 21.—Write sentences containing the following sentences: Stand against; stand by (a friend); stand on (ceremony); stand to (an opinion); secure from (harm); subsequently to.

Ex. 22.—Write sentences containing the following sentences: Succeed to (an estate); succeed in (an enterprise); take after (=be like); take to (smoking); take upon (oneself); tired of; tired with.

Ex. 23.—Write sentences with the following phrases: To the comfort of; a taste of (danger); a taste for; a traitor to; think of; think over; touch upon; touch at (a port).

Ex. 24.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Trespass against (the law); trespass on (a man's time, or his grounds); trust in; trust to; trust (a man) with; turn upon (certain evidence).

Ex. 25.—Write sentences containing the following phrases: Vexed with (a person); vexed at (an occurrence); wait for (a train); wait on (a person); warn of (danger); warn against.

There are also other idiomatic usages in the English language which the young student must learn early to use in the right way. Some of these are good examples of the odd and tortuous way in which all speech—and more especially English—grows. There has never been any logical mind superintending it, arranging it here,

adjusting it there, pruning it in one place, training it in another. Thus a matter 'of the first importance' is also one 'of the last importance'; a lady 'of a certain age' is a lady of quite uncertain age.

The best way of becoming acquainted with the force and function of idiomatic phrases is to employ them in sentences; and the following exercises are given for this purpose:—

Ex. 26.—Introduce the following idiomatic phrases into sentences: As to; at the best; aright; bid fair to; doubt that; doubt but; anything but; of old.

Ex. 27—Work the following idioms into sentences: Had as lief; had rather; I take it; if you like; if you please; in presence of.

Ex. 28.—Introduce the following idioms into sentences: More than probable; more than likely; never so; ever so; no (soldier); no (artist).

Ex. 29.—Work the following idiomatic phrases into sentences: One more . . . and[1]; once more . . . and; other than (with a negative); out upon it! out and out.

Ex. 30.—Introduce the following idioms into sentences: So and so; so so; somehow or other; this much; so much; so much for; the . . . the; nothing . . . not (would not do).

Ex. 31.—Introduce the following idiomatic phrases into sentences: To speak frankly; speaking generally; to boot; to be quite candid; speaking under correction; what with (repeat this phrase three times in the sentence).

[1] Like the sentence, 'One more such victory, and the army is ruined.'

Precision in the Use of Synonyms

CHAPTER VIII

PRECISION IN THE USE OF SYNONYMS

THERE are many words in our language that are very similar in meaning—so similar as to be called synonyms; but there are between them fine shades of difference which must be observed, otherwise the full and true meaning of the writer is not given. To appreciate these fine and finer shades a great deal of reading of good authors is necessary, and also attention and discrimination at the moment of reading. The young writer is apt to make mistakes in the use of such words—especially when they are derived from Latin.

Let us examine a few such couples[1]:

1. **Abandon, desert.**

(i) 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.'
CARY'S DANTE.

(ii) 'Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed.'—DRYDEN.

REMARKS:—An **abandoned** person is a person who has given up all care about right or wrong. A **deserted** family is a family whose head has left them to take care of themselves.

2. **Abate, mitigate, moderate.**

(i) 'Friendship improves happiness and abates misery, by the doubling of our joy and the dividing of our grief.'—ADDISON.

[1] The plan adopted here is to show the USE of the words as employed by good authors, and then to draw as clear distinctions between them as possible.

(ii) 'I esteem it the office of a physician not only to restore health, but to mitigate pain.'—BACON.

(iii) 'Though love moderated be the best of affections, yet the extremity of it is the worst of passions.'

REMARKS:—Macaulay, when a little boy, was very fond of using learned words. He had one day burnt his finger, and, being asked if it was better, replied, 'Yes, ma'am, the agony is abated.' A remedy may **mitigate** sufferings, though it does not entirely relieve them. We also **alleviate** suffering; but we **mitigate** severity. To **moderate** is to bring within measure (modus). Thus we moderate our anger, our indignation; and we also moderate the heat of a room.

3. **Abiding, enduring, lasting.**

(i) 'Here we have no abiding city.'

(ii) 'Ah vain
My yearning for enduring bliss of days.'—W. MORRIS.

(iii) 'May children of our children say
"She wrought her people lasting good."'
TENNYSON (of the Queen).

4. **Ability, capacity.**

(i) 'Natural abilities are like natural plants: they need pruning by study.'—BACON.

(ii) 'Man's capacities cannot be fully measured.'

REMARKS:—Both words contain the idea of **power**. But, in the word **ability**, the power is a power in action; whereas **capacity** means potential power, or the possession of resources. Nature gives capacity; diligence and thought must transform it into ability.

5. **Absurd, preposterous, ludicrous, monstrous.**

(i) 'It would be absurd to measure with a variable standard.'—H. SPENCER.

(ii) 'If a man cannot see a church, it is preposterous to take his opinion about its altar-piece or painted window.'—HUXLEY.

(iii) 'The Duke of Newcastle was in a state of ludicrous distress.'—MACAULAY.

REMARKS:—**Absurd**=Lat. **ab surdo** (an answer from a deaf person). 'Is your father quite well?' 'No! I think it will rain.' **Preposterous**=Lat. **prae**, before, and **postĕrus**, following. That which should be last comes

first: 'the cart before the horse' arrangement. **Ludicrous** from the Lat. **ludĕre**, to play. It means laughable, and contains a slight element of the contemptible. **Monstrous**, from Latin **monstrum**, a show or portent=something worth pointing the finger at (**monstrāre**).

6. Acceptance, acceptation.

(i) The poem met with a cold acceptance (or reception).

(ii) The word 'genius,' in its usual acceptation, means a great deal more than talent.

REMARKS:—Both words have in them the common element of **taking** or **receiving**. But **acceptance** is generally used of persons and bills of exchange; **acceptation** is generally said of words.

7. Act, action.

(i) 'Our acts our angels are—or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.'
'Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance.'

LOWELL.

'Gathering his flowing robe, he seemed to stand
In act to speak, and graceful stretched his hand.'

POPE.

(ii) The committee refused to take action.

REMARKS:—Both words contain the idea of **doing**; but **action** contains in addition the notion of continuity. This comes out very plainly in the phrase, 'An action at law.'

8. Active, agile, alert, lively.

(i) 'Fanaticism is only powerful and active so long as it is aggressive.'—LOWELL.

(ii) 'She was both sure-footed and agile.'

(iii) 'Yet ceaseless still she throve, alert, alive,
The working bee, in full or empty hive.'—CRABBE.

(iv) 'Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those.'—POPE.

REMARKS:—**Active** means given to action or fond of action. We speak also of 'an active demand for wheat.' **Agile** means nimble or quick in movement. **Alert**=watchful and ready to act. 'On the alert'=on the look-out. **Lively**=full of life, animated. We speak of 'a lively child,' 'a lively faith,' 'a lively messenger.'

9. **Admit, allow, concede.**

(i) 'Mirth, admit me of thy crew!'—MILTON.
The words do not admit of such a construction.

(ii) 'The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claim allowed.'
GOLDSMITH.

(iii) Let us concede, for the sake of argument, that an income-tax is a just method of raising a revenue.

REMARKS:—We admit what we might withhold. We allow what we do not wish to dispute or to hinder. We concede out of courtesy.

10. **Advance, Advancement.**

(i) The advance was sounded.
He is greatly in advance of the other pupils.

(ii) His advancement to a higher post was eagerly looked for by all his friends.

11. **Affect, effect.**

(i) 'Study what you most affect.'—SHAKESPEARE.
He affected ignorance of the whole matter.

(ii) 'Almost everything that ordinary fire can effect can be accomplished at the focus of invisible rays.'—TYNDALL.

REMARKS:—Affect (=to like) makes the noun affection; affect (=to pretend) gives us the noun affectation. A rumour or a thought affects one's belief, one's health, one's conduct. On the other hand, a general effects a junction with another, etc.

12. **Aged, ancient, antiquated, obsolete.**

(i) 'The aged man that coffers up his gold
Is plagued with cramps and gouts and painful fits.'
SHAKESPEARE.

(ii) 'The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown.'—KEATS.

(iii) 'Is it possible that the present age can be pleased with that antiquated dialect?'—GOLDSMITH.

(iv) The theory is now quite obsolete.

REMARKS:—**Aged**=full of age or years. Compare landed, talented, moneyed, etc. **Ancient**=old, as opposed to **modern**. We speak of 'ancient

authors,' 'an ancient city,' 'an ancient forest' (like the New Forest). Coleridge has 'An Ancient Mariner,' where **ancient** has a much more picturesque and weird meaning than **old**. 'Ancient History' is history down to 476 (the date of the downfall of the Western Roman Empire). **Antiquated**=gone out of fashion. **Obsolete**=gone out of use, or out of belief.

13. Amplify, develop, expand.

(i) He amplified his ideas far too much.

(ii) 'Exercise soon developed the great powers which Pitt possessed.'—MACAULAY.

(iii) 'Then with expanded wings he steers his flight.'
MILTON.

REMARKS:—To **amplify** is to make ampler or larger. Lord Jeffrey, when a briefless barrister, spent most of his time in what he called **amplification**. That is to say, he tried to make as many words and phrases about an idea as he could: he beat the gold of his thought out as thin as possible. He did not so much write books as 'make copy.' To **develop** is to unfold gradually: we develop a plan or an idea, etc. The verb is also used intransitively: a bud develops into a flower. To **expand** is to stretch out. The verb is also used with an intransitive sense: gas expands.

14. Answer, reply.

(i) He answered neither good nor bad.

(ii) 'Perplexed and troubled at his bad success,
The tempter stood, nor had what to reply.'—MILTON.

REMARK:—We answer a question; we reply to a charge.

In the above quotation from MILTON, success is used in its oldest sense—the sense of something following upon an action. There was 'good success' and 'bad success'; in the present day, however, success is always employed in the good sense.

15. Anticipate, forestall, prevent.

(i) Spain has already anticipated the revenues of next year.

(ii) The speculators forestalled the supplies of wheat.

(iii) 'As charity covers, so modesty preventeth, a multitude of sins.'—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

REMARKS:—**Anticipate** may mean simply to expect. Or it may mean to take or to use before the proper time. To **forestall** is really to buy up goods before they can reach their destined stalls in the market. **Prevent**=to go before. Thus, in the Prayer Book, we find, 'Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings!' where **prevent**=go before and guide us. 'I prevented the

dawning of the morning and cried' (Psalm cxix. 147)=I was up before the dawn and cried. This sense is now quite antiquated.

16. **Anxiety, care, solicitude.**

(i) He felt no anxiety about the conduct of his son.

(ii) 'Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges sleep will never lie!'

SHAKESPEARE.

John's work was always careful work.

(iii) 'Mrs. Todgers looked a little worn by cares of gravy and other such solicitudes arising out of her establishment.'—DICKENS.

REMARKS:—Anxiety is the strongest word of the three. Care may have a weighty meaning, or a light one. A nurse takes care of a baby; the goldsmith takes the greatest care of his filings. Solicitude is rather a pompous word; and, in the quotation above, Dickens employs it intentionally so as to bring out the ridiculous contrast between the character of the gravy and the immense cares bestowed upon it.

17. **Assent, acquiesce, consent.**

(i) 'We cannot assent to a proposition without some intelligent apprehension of it.'—J. H. NEWMAN.

(ii) 'Take the place and attitude that belong to you, and all men acquiesce.'—EMERSON.

(iii) 'My poverty, but not my will, consents.'

SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—We assent to the truth of a statement put forward by another. We acquiesce in a statement or course of action; but in our acquiescence there is something merely passive. We consent to what we might have opposed.

18. **Alternative, choice.**

(i) 'Between these alternatives there is no middle ground.'

(ii) 'The moral universe includes nothing but the exercise of choice.'—O. W. HOLMES.

REMARKS:—An alternative is a choice **between** two things; a choice is a choice **among** any number of things.

'HOBSON'S CHOICE' means no choice at all. Take what you are offered, or nothing. Hobson was an innkeeper at Cambridge, who hired out horses. When a customer wanted to choose his horse, he was told to take his turn—to take the horse that stood nearest the stable-door.

19. **Brief, concise, pithy, terse.**

(i) 'The brief style is that which expresses much in little.' —BEN JONSON.

(ii) 'The concise style leaveth somewhat to be understood.'—*Id.*

(iii) 'Charles Lamb made the most pithy criticism of Spenser when he called him the poet's poet.'—SOWERS.

(iv) ——'s style is singularly neat and terse.

REMARKS:—The noun from **brief** is **brevity**. 'Brevity is the soul of wit,' says Hamlet. A **brief** is a short statement of the points of law or fact (drawn up by the solictor) on which the barrister is to rest his argument. **Concise** means originally **cut**. Hence a concise style is one that has been cut or pruned of its redundancies. (We have the same root in precise; in excision, incision, etc.) A concise style is that style which expresses a great deal in few words—like Bacon's in his Essays. **Pithy**=full of pith or force; sententious. **Terse** originally meant wiped or rubbed; then refined or polished; it now means, in regard to style, compressed.

20. **Candid, frank, open.**

(i) 'Open, candid, and generous, his heart was the constant companion of his hand, and his tongue the artless index of his mind.'—CANNING.

(ii) 'This frank nature of his is not for scouts.'—BEN JONSON.

(iii) 'His heart and hand both open, and both free;
For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows.'
SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—**Candid** comes from the Latin **candidus** (bright, shining, clear). The same root exists in the word **candle**. **Frank** originally meant 'free': it was the name of a very powerful German tribe. A **Franklin** was a freeman sitting on his own land.

21. **Choose, select, pick out.**

(i) 'Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.'—COWPER.

(ii) They selected an excellent site for the church.

(iii) 'To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.'—SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—To choose implies a deliberate act of the will. To select is to choose with care and discrimination. The adjective select has a strong use in 'select society,' 'selected poems,' etc. To pick out is perhaps a little too colloquial.

22. Character, repute, reputation.

(i) 'Character is a composition of qualities that distinguishes one man from all others.'—DRYDEN.

(ii) 'You have a good repute for gentleness.'—SHELLEY.

'Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.'
COWPER.

REMARKS:—Character is the very essence of a man, whether it is known or not. Reputation is the opinion other people hold of a man's character; it is report or esteem, name or fame. A man is responsible for his character; but not for his reputation.

CHARACTER is a Greek word which means mark, from a verb meaning to scratch or engrave. Shakespeare has 'All the charáctery of my sad brows'=all the marks that sadness has made on my forehead.

23. Claim, maintain, assert, aver.

(i) 'And look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford.'—SHAKESPEARE.

(ii) 'Thou hast maintained my right and my cause.'
PSALM ix. 4.

(iii) 'For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain.'—SCOTT.

(iv) 'And all averred I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.'—COLERIDGE.

REMARKS:—We claim or lay claim to a right. It is an Americanism to say, 'I claim that I am right.' To maintain is to hold or uphold; to assert is a strong or aggressive way of stating (this is seen in the phrase, 'to assert oneself'); to aver is to assert with confidence.

The French for TO CLAIM is prétendre; and a claimant is called a prétendant. This form Charles Edward Stuart applied—and quite rightly—to himself; but the English translated it by the word PRETENDER, which gave the people a quite false idea of his position.

24. Continual, continuous.

(i) 'Yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'—LUKE xviii. 5.

(ii) 'Carlyle's "Frederick the Great" is rather a bundle of lively episodes than a continuous narrative.'—LOWELL.

REMARK:—Continual = often recurring; continuous = unbroken.

25. Council, counsel.

(i) 'Henry's ambition was set upon an influential place in the councils of Europe.'—STUBBS.

(ii) 'We took sweet counsel together.'—PSALM lv. 14.

REMARKS:—COUNCIL nowadays means an assembly, as 'The Privy Council,' etc. COUNSEL means either advice, or the barrister who gives advice. Q.C. = Queen's Counsel—a title given to barristers of a high standing.

26. Difference, distinction.

(i) 'Strange that such difference should be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.'—BYROM.

(ii) 'If he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons.'—DR. JOHNSON.

REMARKS:—A difference is, in general, an unlikeness between external things. A distinction is a difference drawn by the mind. Cf. the phrase: 'A distinction without a difference.'

27. Dislike, aversion, antipathy.

(i) 'Our likings and dislikes are founded rather upon humour and fancy than upon reason.'—SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

(ii) 'An aversion to a standing army in times of peace had long been one of the strongest of English sentiments.'—LECKY.

(iii) 'Their natural antipathy of temperament made resentment an easy passage to hatred.'—GEORGE ELIOT.

REMARKS:—Aversion is somewhat passive; antipathy contains an active element. Aversion strengthened becomes abhorrence; antipathy strengthened grows into detestation.

28. **Doubt, hesitation.**

(i) He felt no doubt about the matter.

(ii) 'His hesitation arose not from the poverty, but from the wealth of his vocabulary.'—MACAULAY.

'There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain.'

BROWNING.

REMARKS:—When hesitation becomes a habit, it is called **vacillation.** Persons given to vacillation are called **waverers.**

29. **Effect, accomplish, achieve.**

(i) 'What He decreed
He effected; man He made, and for him built
Magnificent this world.'—MILTON.

(ii) 'To accomplish anything excellent, the will must work for catholic and universal ends.'—EMERSON.

(iii) 'It is not self-indulgence allowed, but victory achieved, that can make a fit happiness for man.'

REMARKS:—To effect is to carry out a design. To accomplish=to complete ('he works hard but accomplishes nothing'); to achieve contains the sense of breaking through difficulty.

30. **Escape, elude.**

(i) 'Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.'—TENNYSON.

(ii) 'One element must for ever elude research: and that is the very element by which poetry is poetry.'—MACAULAY.

REMARKS:—To **escape** is to succeed in avoiding (or evading) danger. To elude is to escape by artifice, or to baffle inquiry. A prisoner eludes pursuit; a secret eludes the keenest search.

31. **Foreign, alien.**

(i) 'There is no foreign land; it is the traveller only that is foreign.'—EMERSON.

(ii) 'Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
To the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.'—KEATS.

REMARKS:—We can say 'foreign to our purpose'; the cuckoo lays 'an alien egg' in the nest of another bird.

32. Fear, alarm, fright, terror.

(i) 'Fear is an uneasiness of the mind upon the thought of future evil likely to befall us.'—LOCKE.

(ii) 'Ready to ride and spread the alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm.'—LONGFELLOW.

(iii) 'The fright was always the greatest part of the harm.'

REMARKS:—Fright is sudden and extreme fear; terror (as in the 'Reign of Terror' during the French Revolution) is extreme habitual fear. Alarm is an English form of the two Italian words, all' arme (=to arms)!

33. Fellow-feeling, compassion, pity.

(i) 'A fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind.'—GARRICK.

(ii) 'He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity.'—PSALM lxxxvii. 38.

(iii) 'Pity implies a participation in sorrow.'—Sir W. HAMILTON.

REMARKS:—Compassion (=a suffering with another) originally meant the same as fellow-feeling; but it has now a more distant meaning. Pity has in it an element of condescension, which the others have not.

34. Get, obtain, acquire, attain.

(i) 'Wisdom not only gets, but got retains.'—QUARLES.

(ii) 'Man, though intent on happiness, is somewhat powerless in obtaining it.'

(iii) 'Men acquire faculties by practice.'—CLIFFORD.

(iv) 'No man can attain to greatness without prolonged exertion.'

REMARKS:—To obtain is to get by effort; to acquire is to get and hold permanently. We attain an end; a statesman has attained to eminence.

35. Give, grant, afford.

(i) 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth
To thee and to thy race I give.'—MILTON.

(ii) 'Grant me the place of this threshing-floor.'—1 CHRON. xxi. 22.

(iii) 'The delight which a work of art affords seems to arise from our recognising in it the operation of MIND.'

REMARKS:—To grant is to give in answer to a request. To afford is to give and also to be able to give, as in the phrases, 'He can afford it'; 'they could not afford the expense.'

36. Help, aid, assist, succour.

(i) 'Let words have scope, though what they do impart
Help nothing else, at least they ease the heart.'
SHAKESPEARE.

(ii) 'The aids to noble life are all within.'—M. ARNOLD.

(iii) A tutor was engaged to assist him in his work.

(iv) 'He is able to succour them that are tempted.'—HEBREWS ii. 18.

REMARKS:—Help is the most common word of the four. The original meaning of assist was to stand by or be present at (or with); and this latter meaning the word still has in French. To succour is to help when in difficulties, danger, or distress.

37. Improve, amend, emend.

(i) The condition of the sick man did not improve.

(ii) He refused to amend his ways.

(iii) The printer's reader emended the errors in the text.

REMARKS:—We improve, or better, what is already good. We amend a fault. An alteration in an act of parliament is called an 'amendment.' To amend has a positive meaning; to emend, a negative: we emend by removing faults. We speak of 'the emended text' of Shakespeare.

38. Inquisitive, inquiring, intrusive.

(i) An inquiring mind is not necessarily inquisitive.

(ii) 'He who inquires has not found.'—NEWMAN.

(iii) 'Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day.'—THOMSON.

REMARKS:—Inquire comes from the Latin quaero (I ask), and in (into). So does inquisitive; but it has received from usage an element of intrusiveness or prying. Intrusive comes from the Latin intrudo (I thrust into); hence an intrusive person is a person who thrusts himself nto places and business where he has no right to be.

39. Intention, design, purpose.

(i) 'So little intention had we of shooting bears that we had not brought rifle or even gun with us.'—FROUDE.

(ii) 'Ask of the politicians the end for which laws were originally designed.'—BURKE.

(iii) My uncle gave up his purpose of travelling.

REMARKS:—The original meaning of **intention** is stretching out or directing the mind. A **design** is a studied plan or intention. A **purpose** means both an internal act of the will, and also the external act purposed.

40. Invent, discover.

(i) 'In an evening, often with a child on each knee, he would invent a tale for their amusement.'—LADY HOLLAND (of Sydney Smith).

(ii) 'Crimes of the most frightful kind had been discovered; others were suspected.'—MACAULAY.

REMARKS:—The original meaning of **invent** is to come upon (that is, in the wanderings and gropings of thought); of **discover** to take off the cover. Edison invented the phonograph, after he had discovered certain laws and phenomena of sound. Columbus discovered America: the Americans have produced many most ingenious inventions.

41. Last, latest.

(i) 'The last of all the bards was he
Who sang of Border chivalry.'—SCOTT.
'He is the lord of all the landscape round,
Even to its last horizon.'—TENNYSON.

(ii) What is the latest news from India?

REMARKS:—**Last** is only a contracted form of **latest**; but the use of each word is quite different. We say 'the last (not the latest) page'; 'on one's last legs'; 'The Last Day,' etc. etc.

42. Law, rule, regulation.

(i) 'Law is a rule of action prescribed by authority, which authority is supported by power or force.'

(ii) 'Led by some rule that guides but not restrains.'—POPE.

(iii) 'The Javanese knows no freedom. His whole existence is regulationed.'

REMARKS:—We say the **rules**, not the **laws**, of arithmetic. We speak of the Army Regulations. The word **regulation** seems to be the most limited and specific term; the word **law** is the widest and largest.

43. **Leaning, bent, inclination, bias.**

(i) 'They supposed he 'd run away to sea, as he had a leaning that way.'

(ii) 'It is the legislator's best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind.'—HUME.

(iii) 'I shall certainly not baulk your inclination.'—SHERIDAN.

(iv) 'Bias is a particular leaning or inclination.'

REMARKS:—These four words are as nearly perfect synonyms as any four English words can be. **Bias** is used more of a moral inclination; **bent** of a natural tendency towards a subject of study or practice. A **bias** may be irrational; a **bent** is not so.

44. **Memory, remembrance, recollection.**

(i) 'Every organ of the nervous system has its own memory.'—LADD.

(ii) 'Remembrance is the reviving of past knowledge.'—LOCKE.

(iii) 'If the idea be sought after by the mind, and with pain and endeavour found, and brought again into view, it is recollection.'—LOCKE.

REMARKS:—**Memory** is the general name for the power of remembering. **Remembrance** is an act of memory. **Recollection** is a more laborious act of remembrance.

45. **Mutual, common, reciprocal.**

(i) 'By the bye, ma'am, you have a lodger, I may call him Our Mutual Friend.'—DICKENS.

'They buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation of the enemy.'—BROOKS.

(ii) 'Such a man as Emerson belongs to no one town or province: he is the common property of mankind.'—O. W. HOLMES.

(iii) They gave each other reciprocal aid.

46. **News, intelligence, information, tidings.**

(i) 'Beyond it blooms the garden that I love,
News from the humming city comes to it.'
TENNYSON.

(ii) 'I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.'
—SHAKESPEARE.

(iii) The sergeant, from information received, resolved to arrest the man.

(iv) 'And every hour some tidings came
Of havoc and dismay.'—AYTOUN.

REMARKS:—**News** is the most general term of the four. The original meaning of **intelligence** is choosing, next understanding, and lastly, only a piece of news. **Tidings** is a rather old-fashioned (or archaic) word.

47. **Occurrence, incident, event.**

(i) I never heard of the occurrence.

(ii) 'It was an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest.'—CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

(iii) ''Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.'
CAMPBELL.

REMARKS:—An **occurrence** is that which meets one in daily life; an **incident** is something of more importance; an **event** belongs to the larger transactions of history. The word **transpire** is sometimes commonly used for occur: its primary meaning is to **breathe through**, and next, to come to light.

48. **Observation, observance.**

(i) 'Angling is an art—either by practice or long observation, or both.'—IZAAK WALTON.

(ii) 'Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, I can plead
A course of long observance for its use.'—COWPER.

REMARKS:—The idea common to both words is the idea of **attending**. In the first, we attend to or observe a thing for the purpose of storing up knowledge in the mind; in the second, we attend to or observe a law for the purpose of obeying it.

49. **Observation, remark.**

(i) 'That is a foolish observation.' 'The lawyer left the house without making any observation.'

(ii) 'The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude conjecture and remark, however shrewd.'—COWPER.

REMARKS:—These two words are almost complete synonyms. But the use of **observation** in the sense of **remark** is now a little old-fashioned and stiff.

50. **Overcome, conquer, vanquish, subdue.**

(i) 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'—ROMANS xii. 21.

(ii) 'We conquered France, but felt our captive's charms,
Her arts victorious triumphed o'er our arms.'—POPE.

(iii) 'Sorrow and grief have vanquished all my powers.'—SHAKESPEARE.

(iv) 'And Rome learned arts from Greece whom she subdued.'—POPE.

REMARKS:—**Overcome** and **vanquish** express a superiority limited to a particular time which does not reach beyond the present. **Conquer** implies permanence; **subdue**, a still higher degree of permanence.

51. **Persuade, convince.**

(i) 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'—ACTS xxvi. 28.

(ii) No argument can convince a stupid or an obstinate man.

REMARKS:—To **persuade**=to induce a person to believe a statement by reasons, argument, or representations. To **convince** is to satisfy by argument or evidence. It is a stronger word than persuade. In persuasion we may act on another person's will by motives or inducements; when we try to convince, we appeal solely to the reason.

52. **Plan, scheme, devise.**

(i) 'Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
And follow well this plan of mine.'—LONGFELLOW.

(ii) 'Tell the preacher to send a scheme of the debate, with all the different heads.'—GEORGE ELIOT.

(iii) 'Devise but how you 'll use him when he comes,
And we two will devise to bring him hither.'

SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—**Plan** is the most general term. **Scheme** contains sometimes the element of cunning, though not in the passage quoted. **Devise** (the noun for which is device) means to 'think out.'

53. **Power, ability, capacity.**

(i) 'He never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with Eternal God for power.'

TENNYSON (of Wellington).

Knowledge itself is a power.'—BACON.

(ii) Natural abilities are like natural plants: they need pruning by study.'—BACON.

(iii) 'Capacity signifies greater receptivity than power or faculty.'—N. PORTER.

REMARKS:—**Power** is the most general term of the three. **Ability** has an active sense. **Capacity** (which originally meant the power of containing) has a passive or receptive sense.

54. **Prominent, predominant.**

(i) 'The side of things which is most prominent when looked at from European soil may not always be most prominent when it is looked at from American soil.'—FREEMAN.

(ii) The Conservative Party was at that time the predominant party.

REMARK:—The word **outstanding** is a Scottidism in the sense of *prominent*.

55. **Proposal, proposition.**

(i) We made proposals for a treaty of peace.

(ii) 'A proposition is a complete sentence spoken in the indicative mood.'—WILSON.

REMARKS:—A proposal has to do with action—it is a plan or scheme offered for acceptance; a proposition is a statement set out for discussion or consideration.

56. **Purpose, propose.**

(i) 'I have possessed your Grace of what I purpose.'

SHAKESPEARE (Merchant of Venice).

(ii) 'The Sphinx is said to propose various difficult questions and riddles to men.'—BACON.

REMARKS:—To purpose is to intend, and this intention may be limited to one person; to propose is to offer for acceptance or rejection, and there must be two persons concerned.

57. Rational, reasonable.

(i) 'It is man's glory and happiness to have a rational nature.'—LAW.

(ii) 'The terrors of the child are quite reasonable.'—EMERSON.

REMARKS:—Rational indicates the possession of reason; reasonable the habitual use of it. We might quite correctly say: Man is a rational animal; but he is not a reasonable being.

58. Reason, motive, purpose, cause.

(i) The general could give no good reason for his course of action.

(ii) 'We must measure morality by motives, not by deeds.'—H. SPENCER.

(iii) His purpose in building these fortifications was quite plain.

(iv) God is the great First Cause.

REMARKS:—A reason is an idea in the mind which forms the cause of a certain belief. A motive is that which sets the will in motion: it may be reasonable or not; it may be selfish or unselfish. A purpose is the internal end or aim towards which we shape our action. A cause is the power which produces an effect.

59. Relative, relation.

(i) 'Our friends and relatives stand weeping by,
Dissolved in tears to see us die.'—POMFRET.

(ii) 'Sir, you may spare your application,
I 'm no such beast, nor his relation.'—POPE.

REMARKS:—Relative is really an adjective used as a noun, and generally refers to a concrete person. Relation here is an abstract noun used in a concrete sense.

60. **Reliable, trustworthy, trusty.**

(i) 'The number of steps in an argument does not detract from its reliableness.'—MILL.

(ii) The steward is a man who is thoroughly trustworthy.

(iii) 'The neighing steeds are to the chariots tied,
The trusty weapon sits on every side.'—DRYDEN.

REMARKS:—It has been objected to the adjective **reliable** that it is improperly formed. We do not rely a person; we rely on him. The word therefore ought to be relionable. But the analogies in the language support the present usage. We say **conversable** of a person it is easy to converse with; we say **laughable** of a thing that it is permissible to laugh at. **Trust** is connected with **true**. A true man is a man in whom we can trust.

61. **Requite, repay, retaliate.**

(i) 'I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts,
And will with deeds requite thy gentleness.'
SHAKESPEARE.

(ii) 'He will repay you; money can be repaid,
Not kindness such as yours.'—TENNYSON.

(iii) He will be certain to retaliate.

REMARKS:—**Requite** comes from the Latin **quies** (quiet). **Repay** comes from the Latin **pax** (=pacs, peace). Hence the idea at the foundation of both words is the same. When we can cry quits with our creditor, we have brought him to 'quiet'; when we pay a person money that is owing, we bring him to 'peace.' (The hard guttural c=k, reappears in the verb **pacate**.) **Retaliate** comes from the Latin word talio (=payment in kind). The older uses of the word did not contain the modern idea of revenge. We retaliated a kindness; we retaliated a visit.

62. **Retard, delay.**

(i) The strike retarded the building of the ship.

(ii) 'Justice delayed is justice denied.'—GLADSTONE.

REMARKS:—To **retard** is always transitive; to **delay** may be either transitive or intransitive.

63. **Rhetoric, eloquence, oratory.**

(i) 'Rhetoric is the art of using language so as to influence others.'

(ii) 'By eloquence we understand the overflow of powerful feelings upon occasions fitted to excite them.'—DE QUINCEY.

(iii) 'When a world of men
Could not prevail with all their oratory,
Yet hath a woman's kindness over-ruled.'

SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—Rhetoric belongs to the study—to books, to literature; eloquence to the platform. Oratory is the production of an orator, that is, of a speaker. Elocution is a body of rules for speaking which are supposed to make a man eloquent.

64. **Residence, house, domicile.**

(i) 'What is man?
Once the blest residence of truth divine.'—COWPER.

(ii) 'A man, I must confess, of no mean house.'

(iii) 'In Scotland, residence for at least forty days constitutes a domicile.'

REMARKS:—Reside and residence are rather big words. House is often used in the sense of family: we speak of the great 'House of Cecil.' Domicile is the place of abode from the point of view of the law.

65. **Sate, satiate, satisfy, surfeit.**

(i) 'Sated at home, of wife and children tired,
The restless soul is driven abroad to roam;
Sated abroad, all seen, yet nought admired,
The restless soul is driven to wander home.'

THE BROTHERS SMITH.

(ii) 'He may be satiated, but not satisfied.'

(iii) 'The sports of children satisfy the child.'—GOLDSMITH.

(iv) 'They are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.'—SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—The first three words have at their basis the Latin word sat (enough). Satiate is perhaps not quite so strong as sate. To surfeit is to overdo, from the French surfaire (from Latin super, above, and facĕre, to do). Glut and gorge convey different shades of the same meaning.

66. **Seek, search, inquire, investigate.**

(i) 'Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'

(ii) 'Prosperity doth search a gentleman's temper
More than his adverse fortune.'—OLD PLAY.

(iii) 'Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy.'—MATTHEW x. 11.

(iv) 'The philosopher investigates truth independently.'

REMARKS:—To **search** is to seek for something lost or concealed. To **inquire** may mean merely to ask, or to seek eagerly. To **investigate** is to search for truth on a plan previously formed.

67. **Site, situation.**

(i) The site was too expensive for us to build on.

(ii) 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion.'—PSALM xlviii. 2.

REMARK:—A beautiful situation for a house may be, for many reasons, an undesirable site.

68. **Silent, reticent, taciturn.**

(i) 'Her eyes are homes of silent prayer.'—TENNYSON.

(ii) 'Mr. Glegg, like all men of his stamp, was extremely reticent about his will.'—GEORGE ELIOT.

(iii) 'From a taciturn man, I believe she would transform me into a talker.'—CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

REMARKS:—**Silent** means simply not speaking. **Reticent** is silent about a particular thing, or keeping back something that others have a right to know. **Taciturn** has in it an element of unsociability, or of gloom or moroseness.

69. **Speech, talk, conversation.**

(i) 'God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused.'—TENNYSON.

(ii) 'When I am come home, I must chat with my children and talk with my servants.'—SIR T. MORE.

(iii) 'Wise, cultivated, genial conversation is the last flower of civilisation.'—EMERSON.

REMARKS:—**Speech** (from **speak**, as **breach** is from **break**) is the general term for the human faculty of articulation. **Talk** (connected with **tale** and **tell**) is the word for familiar conversation. **Conversation** is a more ceremonious term than talk. It was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries applied to conduct or 'walk of life.'

70. **Transpire, happen.**

(i) 'The penny-a-liners "allude" in cases where other writers would "refer"; and, in their dialect, things "transpire," and do not "take place."'—HALL.

(ii) 'How happens it he is not here?'

REMARKS:—The original meaning of **transpire** is to breathe through. It should never be used in the sense of **happen**; but its meaning of **to leak out** or **to come to be known** is quite correct.

71. **Thought, reflection, meditation.**

(i) 'Thought always proceeds from the less to the more determinate.'—E. CAIRD.

(ii) 'Education begins the gentleman; but reading, good company, and reflection must finish him.'—LOCKE.

(iii) 'And the imperial vot'ress passëd on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.'—SHAKESPEARE.

REMARKS:—**Thought** is really the comparing one idea with another and drawing conclusions from the comparison. **Reflection** is the turning back of thought upon oneself. **Meditation** is the slow weighing or pondering of ideas, or brooding over them.

72. **Try, attempt, essay, endeavour.**

(i) 'Among other effects of affliction, one is to try a friend.'—HOWELL.

(ii) 'Something attempted, something done, has earned a night's repose.'—LONGFELLOW.

(iii) He wrote an essay on the life and writings of Addison.

(iv) 'And yet I have done my best endeavours.'—DR. FRANKLIN.

REMARKS:—The original meaning of **to try** is to separate by rubbing. To **attempt** is to try with some effort; to **endeavour** is to try with serious effort. An **essay** is an attempt at the discussion of a question or problem.

73. **Uncommon, singular, remarkable, extraordinary.**

(i) He went through a number of uncommon experiences.

(ii) 'Strangled life mine—rather curious history—not extraordinary—but singular.'—DICKENS.

(iii) 'And 'tis remarkable that they
Talk most who have the least to say.'—PRIOR.

(iv) 'In extraordinary distresses, we pray for extraordinary reliefs.'—JOHN DONNE.

REMARKS:—**Singular** is that which is remarkable because it stands alone and by itself. **Remarkable** is that which is worthy of notice or remark. **Extraordinary** is that which lies outside of the ordinary run of things.

74. Universal, general.

(i) 'The universal law of mankind is the law of reason.'—LOCKE.

(ii) 'He appeals to all,
And by the general voice will stand or fall.'
SHERIDAN.

REMARKS:—**Universal** suffrage is the suffrage (or vote) of **all** without any exception. A **general** rule is one that holds good in most cases. **Universal** cannot be compared; **general** can.

75. Vacillate, waver, hesitate.

(i) '. . . He could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind
That, ever working, could no centre find.'
CRABBE.

(ii) 'For an Outlaw this is the law
That men him take and bind
Hangëd to be, without pitée
And waver with the wind.'
THE NUT-BROWN MAID.

(iii) 'Nature, even if we hesitate to call it good, is infinitely interesting, infinitely beautiful.'—SEELEY.

REMARKS:—**Vacillate**, though a Latin word, is connected with the purely English word **wag**. **Waver** comes from **wave**. The idea in **waver** is much the same as that in **fluctuate** (Lat. **fluctus**, a wave). William IV. wrote a letter to those members of the House of Peers who could not make up their minds about the Reform Bill of 1832. They were known as 'The Waverers.'

76. Visionary, imaginative, fantastic.

(i) 'The sonnet glittered—a gay myrtle leaf—
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow.'—WORDSWORTH.

(ii) 'Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful, mind.'—COLERIDGE.

(iii) 'The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice.'—MACAULAY.

REMARKS:—**Visionary** has a stronger meaning than **imaginative**. It contains a slight element of blame; as a visionary person is in danger of relying and acting on his visions as if they were realities. The first two words are applied to persons; **fantastic** generally to things.

77. **Vivid, clear, lucid, distinct.**

(i) 'A good style is the vivid expression of clear thinking.'—HUXLEY.

(ii) 'Soft, gentle, loving eyes that gleam
Clear as a starlit mountain stream.'—O. W. HOLMES.

(iii) 'He gave a singularly lucid account of the debate.'—MACAULAY.

(iv) 'A distinct idea is that in which the mind perceives a difference from every other.'—LOCKE.

REMARKS:—The original meaning of **vivid** is living or lively. **Clear** is used in many senses: we say 'a clear night,' 'a clear case,' 'clear on the point,' 'three clear days,' etc. **Lucid** means, primarily, emitting light. **Distinct** means clearly marked out.

78. **Wanting, defective, deficient.**

(i) 'The young people of our time are said to be wanting in reverence.'

(ii) 'The boy's knowledge of grammar was very defective.'

(iii) 'Those who are deficient in matter endeavour to make it up with words.'—MONTAIGNE.

REMARKS:—**Deficient** and **defective** both come from the same Latin verb; but the latter word seems to combine the two notions of **defect** and **flaw**.

79. **Wish, want, desire.**

(i) 'The Spartan wished the second place to gain,
And great Ulysses wished, nor wished in vain.'
POPE.

(ii) 'Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.'—GOLDSMITH.

(iii) 'For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.'—TENNYSON.

REMARKS:—Want often means to go without. Desire is a stronger word than wish.

80. **Wit, humour.**

(i) 'In wit, if by wit be meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, Bacon never had an equal.'—MACAULAY.

(ii) 'Humour is something genial and loving.'—DR. BAIN.
'Humour is a mixture of love and wit.'—THACKERAY.

REMARKS:—The earliest meaning of wit was knowledge; and this meaning is still found in witness, our five wits, at one's wits' end, etc. In the eighteenth century it meant mental ability; it now means the sudden discovery of unexpected likenesses. Humour belongs to character; wit is an affair of the surface of the mind. Sydney Smith was a wit; Thackeray was a humorist.

81. **Yield, submit, surrender.**

(i) 'It is bad to yield a blind submission to authority.'—GLADSTONE.

(ii) '. . . To thy husband's will
Thine shall submit! . . .'—MILTON.

(iii) 'Venetia was in 1866 surrendered to Italy.'

REMARKS:—To submit is to put under; surrender is to give up something; yield is the general term for both.

The following Exercises are intended to train to PRECISION in the use of words, and to enable the student to employ each word in its proper shade of meaning.

Ex. 1.—Work the following words into sentences: Abandon, desert; mitigate, moderate; enduring, lasting.

Ex. 2.—Make sentences with the following words employed in their most modern meaning: Ability, capacity; absurd, preposterous, ludicrous, monstrous.

Ex. 3.—Make four sentences containing the following words in their proper sense: Acceptance, acceptation; act, action.

Ex. 4.—Write six or seven sentences containing the following words:—Active, agile, alert, lively; admit, allow, concede.

Ex. 5.—Introduce the following words into sensible sentences: Advance, advancement; affect, effect.

Ex. 6.—Make sentences containing the following words: Aged, ancient, antiquated, obsolete; amplify, develop, expand. (Give also the exact meanings of the first four.)

Ex. 7.—Write sentences which include the following words: Answer, reply; anticipate, forestall, prevent. (Distinguish carefully the shades of difference between the meanings of the last three.)

Ex. 8.—Write six sentences containing the following words: Anxiety, care, solicitude; assent, acquiesce, consent. (Distinguish the shades of meaning of the last three.)

Ex. 9.—Write four sentences containing the following words: Alternative, choice; allude, mention. (Distinguish between *alternative* and *choice*.)

Ex. 10.—Write six sentences, each containing one of the following words: Brief, concise, pithy, terse; candid, frank.

Ex. 11.—Make six sentences containing the following words: Choose, select, pick out; character, repute, reputation. (Distinguish between the meanings of the last three.)

Ex. 12.—Make six sentences, each containing one of the following words: Claim, maintain, assert, aver; commonly, generally.

Ex. 13.—Write five sentences with the following words included: Correct, exact, accurate; continual, continuous.

Ex. 14.—Write six sentences in which the following words shall occur: Council, counsel; courage, bravery, valour, fortitude.

Ex. 15.—Make five sentences containing the following words: Dislike, aversion, antipathy; doubt, hesitation. (Give the shades of meaning of the first three.)

Ex. 16.—Write five sentences containing the following words: Effect, accomplish, achieve; escape, elude.

Ex. 17.—Make six sentences, each of which shall contain one of the following words: Foreign, alien; fear, alarm, fright, terror.

Ex. 18.—Make six sentences containing the following words: Compassion, pity; get, obtain, acquire, attain.

Ex. 19.—Write six sentences, in each of which one of the following words is to be used in its right meaning: Give, grant, afford; aid, assist, succour.

Ex. 20.—Write six sentences to show the use of the following words: Improve, amend, emend; inquisitive, inquiry, intrusive.

Ex. 21.—Write five sentences with the following words in them: Intention, design, purpose; invent, discover.

Ex. 22.—Make five sentences containing the following words: Last, latest; law, rule, regulation.

Ex. 23.—Write six sentences, in which the following words shall be rightly employed: Bent, inclination, bias; leave, desert, forsake.

Ex. 24.—Write six sentences containing the following words: Memory, remembrance, recollection; mutual, common, reciprocal. (Distinguish between the meanings of the first three.)

Ex. 25.—Make seven sentences with the following words used in their proper shades of meaning: News, intelligence, information, tidings; occurrence, incident, event.

Ex. 26.—Write seven sentences with the following words in them: Observance, observation, remark; overcome, conquer, vanquish, subdue.

Ex. 27.—Make five sentences containing the following words: Persuade, convince; plan, scheme, devise.

Ex. 28.—Write five sentences, each containing one of the following words: Power, ability, capacity; prominent, predominant.

Ex. 29.—Write four sentences containing the following words: Proposal, proposition; purpose, propose.

Ex. 30.—Write six sentences, each to contain one of the following words: Rational, reasonable, reason; motive, purpose, cause. (Distinguish between the meanings of the last three.)

Ex. 31.—Write five sentences, introducing the following words: Relative, relation; reliable, trustworthy, trusty.

Ex. 32.—Make five sentences with the following words in them: Requite, repay, retaliate; retard, delay.

Ex. 33.—Give definitions of the following words: Rhetoric, eloquence, oratory; residence, house, domicile.

Ex. 34.—Write eight short sentences containing the following words: Sate, satiate, satisfy, surfeit; seek, search, inquire, investigate.

Ex. 35.—Write five sentences, each containing one of the following words: Site, situation; silent, reticent, taciturn.

Ex. 36.—Write five sentences, introducing the following words: Speech, talk, conversation; succession, sequence.

Ex. 37.—Write five sentences introducing the following words: Transpire, happen; thought, reflection, meditation.

Ex. 38.—Write eight short sentences with the following words: Try, attempt, essay, endeavour; uncommon, singular, remarkable, extraordinary.

Ex. 39.—Write five sentences with the following words: Universal, general; vacillate, waver, hesitate.

Ex. 40.—Write seven short sentences with the following words: Visionary, imaginative, fantastic; vivid, clear, lucid, distinct.

The Two Languages in English

CHAPTER IX

THE TWO LANGUAGES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. THERE are said to be about one hundred thousand words in the English language. But of these not quite one-third—not thirty thousand—are English words. The rest are mostly Latin. Thus, at the very beginning of our attempt to write English, we are met by the paradox: the English language consists chiefly of words that are Latin.

How is this? How has such a state of things come about? To understand this, one must know something about the fateful history of our mother-tongue.

English was a quite pure speech up to the year 1066: that is, it consisted only of English words and English phrases. Then, with the Norman invasion of that year, there began to come into this island a language which was not English in any sense—but French. Now French is a kind of Latin—it is 'Latin with the ends bitten off,' or very much altered; and Latin is the language of the people who lived in Italy, and whose capital was Rome. Latin is the very essence—the basis and the staple of the French language; but it is nothing more than a considerable contribution to our English tongue. It has given us many thousand words: it has given us no habits—that is, it has given us no grammar. And it has not had much influence on the build of our sentences.

2. The Norman-French people who settled among us and ruled us presented us with several thousand words, which were in reality Latin words with a few alterations. Then, at the Revival of Learning, a still larger number of Latin words came into our language. The Latin word facilis became **facile**; the word natio appeared as **nation**; the word opinio as **opinion**; the verb separatum as **separate**; and so on with thousands of other words. And, since that time, new Latin words have been coming yearly into our language, and settling there.

3. In the time of Shakespeare, the language might be said to consist of two lobes—the English lobe and the Latin lobe. If, on the other hand, we employ another image, and call these two elements of our speech two wings, it would be reasonable to say that Shakespeare rose on these two mighty pinions into 'the seventh heaven of invention.' He employs the Latin element with the utmost skill; and he makes use of the English element for the purpose of throwing up the brilliance of the other by the force of contrast. Thus, in the play of 'Antony and Cleopatra,' he makes Enobarbus say of Cleopatra:

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety.

In this sentence, the plain English word **stale** forms a contrast and a background to the more strongly coloured Latin words **infinite variety.** Again, in the play of 'Macbeth,' he makes the conscience-stricken chief say:

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No! this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine
> Making the green one red.

In this passage, the brilliant colouring of the Latin words **multitudinous** and **incarnadine** is emphasised by the

short, simple, English words—**green one red.** (The reader will remember that, a few minutes before, Lady Macbeth had remarked, 'A little water clears us from this deed.')

4. We can see from these two examples that Latin words are of great use to us in endeavouring to give the fullest expression to our meaning and our feelings. In fact, we should not now know what to do without them. They lend also a romantic tinge to many English phrases. Thus Coleridge gave to his celebrated ballad the title of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.' He might have called it The Rime of the Old Sailor, or The Rime of the Elderly Seaman; and his title would then have consisted of pure English words. But, in the two Latin words—**ancient** and **mariner**—that he has employed, there is a far-offness, a distance which gives a kind of enchantment, a hint that the story he is going to tell is not a story of the common or everyday world, but a narrative of forces and powers that are supernatural and other-worldly.

5. We are obliged,[1] then, whether we will or no, to employ[1] Latin words when we sit down to write English sentences.[1] What larger or smaller number of Latin words we shall use depends partly on the nature of the subject, partly on the knowledge and habits of the writer. In the eighteenth century, the writing of a highly Latinised style had become a fashion. Gibbon (the author of 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire') and Dr. Johnson (the author of the best English Dictionary of that century) both made use of a very large number of Latin words. Gibbon employed at least thirty per cent.; and Dr. Johnson about twenty-eight per cent. But, when we come to writings and writers that are more simple and who have to treat of homely

[1] In this very sentence there are three Latin words.

subjects, we find the percentage of Latin words very much smaller. Thus, in our translation of the Gospel of St. John, only four per cent. of Latin words is found; and whole verses can be quoted from that gospel in which there are English words alone, and not one word that is Latin. Thus, in chap. xi. 34, we find this sentence: 'And he said, where have ye laid Him? And they said, come and see.' And the twelve following verses are completely free from Latin words—with the single exception of the word **caused** in the thirty-seventh verse. Shakespeare, in some parts of his plays, has only nine per cent.; Tennyson has about eleven per cent.; and Mrs. Browning (in the 'Cry of the Children') has only eight per cent.

6. The fact is our language has been enormously enriched by the contributions made to it by the Latin tongue. Among other things it has given us a power of drawing distinctions and of being precise and exact in expressing our thoughts which few other languages possess. If we look at the differences in meaning between the two sets of words below—one set being pure English, the other Latin (most of which have come to us through French), we shall see that the two classes of words have given us a range of expression which the pure English side alone could not have assured to us:—

English	Latin (or French)	English	Latin (or French)
Almighty	Omnipotent	Buy	Purchase[2]
Anger	Ire	Calling	Vocation
Blessing	Benediction[1]	Dread	Terror
Bloom	Flower	Dumb	Mute
Bough	Branch	Fearful	Timid
Boyish	Puerile	Feeling[3]	Sentiment
Burdensome	Onerous	Feather	Plume

[1] A benediction is a blessing *pronounced*. [2] To *purchase* is to chase or pursue. [3] *Feeling* is stronger than sentiment.

English	Latin (or French)	English	Latin (or French)
Foe	Enemy	Mild	Gentle
Foreknowledge	Prescience	Quick	Rapid
Forerunner	Precursor	Shady	Umbrageous
Foretell	Predict	Shepherd	Pastor
Freedom [1]	Liberty	Tearful	Lachrymose
Friendly [2]	Amiable	Understanding	Intelligence
Heal	Cure	Unfriendly	Inimical (or hostile)
Hearty [3]	Cordial		
Heavy	Ponderous	Unread(able) [6]	Illegible
Kindness [4]	Bounty	Watery	Aqueous
Kingdom	Realm [5]	Wish	Desire
Kingly	Royal	Womanly	Feminine
Limb	Member	Womanish	Effeminate
Liveliness	Vivacity	Work	Labour
Lowly	Humble	Wretched	Miserable
Manly	Virile	Writing	Scripture
Meal	Flour	Yearly	Annual

[1] *Freedom* comes closer 'to our business and bosoms' (as Bacon says) than *liberty*. [2] *Friendly* is a much stronger and truer word than *amiable*. [3] The same remark may be made about *hearty* and *cordial*. [4] *Kindness* is a kindly word; *bounty* has a savour of patronage. [5] The *real* in *realm* is a Norman-French spelling of *royal*. [6] *Able* is a Latin ending affixed to an English word.

A quite cursory examination of these columns will prove to the reader that there is, on the whole, a marked difference in meaning between each pair of words—a difference either in the meaning or in the shade of meaning or in the use; and that we shall find ourselves able to use one word in one set of circumstances, and another in another.

7. At the end of the seventeenth century there was a strong tendency to bring in these words in crowds; and many did come in. But, finding that their places were already supplied and their opportunities for doing work forestopped, they departed and have not been heard of

since. Thus Bishop Jeremy Taylor introduced the word **ludibundness** (for sportiveness); **cecity** (for mental blindness); **clancular** (for secret); **ferity** (for cruelty); and **paranymph** (for lady's maid). This kind of thing rose to a ridiculous excess, till the good sense of the English nation came to see that it had no real use for words of this kind; and they were quietly dropped. It is curious, however, to remark that the Hindoo who has studied English has always a strong tendency to employ large numbers of Latin words; and this is shown in the writing of his essays and 'poems.' The following is a specimen of this Hindoo style (the writer is addressing a young lady, whom he wishes to join him in the garden):—

> Then, Thyra, come, nor longer cogitate!
> Thy egress let no influence dire retard!
> Conspicuous at the portals of thy gate,
> Suspensively[1] I supplicate regard!

Now every word in these four lines is English; but they are not used as an English-born writer would use them. No Englishman would write a style so highly Latinised; if he used these words at all, he would use them in a different connection and in the company of a large number of Saxon words. This shows that a language does not consist merely of a number of words, but of a large number of very varied habits. Besides the word, the foreigner has to learn the use of the word. It is easy to do the first; it is often difficult to do the second. To understand and to feel exactly how words must be used, it is often necessary for the foreigner to go and live for some time in the country to which the words belong.

8. Dr. Wendell Holmes, in a short poem which he entitles

[1] He is hanging on the posts of the gate and begs but for one single look!

AESTIVATION (Summering), ridicules this overdone employment of Latin. The following is one of the verses:—

> Me wretched! let me curr[1] to quercine[2] shades!
> Effund[3] your albid[4] hausts,[5] lactiferous[6] maids!
> O might I vole[7] to some umbrageous clump—
> Depart,—be off,—excede,[8] evade, erump![9]

9. In the present age there is also a tendency to use Latin words, when simple English words would do as well, and often better. This tendency is fostered and encouraged to a large extent by journalists, who have to write rapidly, who have to think of making a large amount of copy, who have little time to revise and prune their work, and some of whom may have the pardonable weakness to show off their learning. Thus a reporter, forgetting his knowledge of 'the well of English undefiled,' writes of some workmen drinking whisky as 'ingurgitating spirituous stimulant.' A good-looking woman is put down as 'a female possessing considerable personal attractions.' An ordinary drunkard is raised to the classical level of an 'inebriate.' The feelings of a father are spoken of, or rather written of, as 'paternal sentiments.' The usual meaning of a word appears as its 'accepted signification'; and real happiness is translated into 'extreme felicity.' With writers of this stamp, dangers do not grow, but 'assume proportions of considerable magnitude.' A good house is 'a desirable mansion'; and for one to ask questions about the house is 'to give his remarks an interrogative turn.' An after-dinner speech is a 'post-prandial oration.' 'Donate,' for to give, is an Americanism; and so is 'locate' for to place. Slavery was not made any better for the negro when it was christened 'involuntary servitude'; and clotted nonsense is not less

[1] Run. [2] Of oak. [3] Pour out. [4] White. [5] Draughts. [6] Milk-carrying. [7] Fly. [8] Go out. [9] Break out.

nonsense when it is called 'an inexplicable concatenation of hyperbolical incongruity.' A school is not simply a school; it is a 'seminary,' or an 'educational establishment,' or a 'collegiate institute,' or a 'daily establishment for the sons of gentlemen.'

10. An Alderman of the City of London was offended when one of his colleagues proposed to inscribe on the tomb of the great statesman George Canning, the simple words, 'He died poor.' He thought it would be better to have carved on the monument what were to him more dignified expressions: 'He expired in circumstances of extreme indigence.' Educated persons now shun this kind of English as far as they can: they follow the advice given by Mr. Kington-Oliphant—'to look askance at words that come from the Latin: they are too often traps for the unwary.' Professor Freeman,[1] who was always a vigorous writer, says of a new edition of his Essays:—

In almost every page I have found it easy to put some plain English word, about whose meaning there can be no doubt, instead of those needless French and Latin words which are thought to add dignity to style, but which in truth only add vagueness. I am in no way ashamed to find that I can write purer and clearer English now than I did fourteen or fifteen years back; and I think it well to mention the fact for the encouragement of younger writers. The common temptation of beginners is to write in what they think a more elevated fashion. It needs some years of practice before a man fully takes in the truth that, for real strength, and above all for real clearness, there is nothing like the old English speech of our fathers.

11. Another misfortune happened: a considerable number of good old vigorous and kindly words were turned out

[1] Quoted by Kington-Oliphant in his 'Sources of Standard English,' p. 342.

of the language by the incoming of these foreign expressions. No writer seems to be strong enough or influential enough to bring them back again; if any writer could, it would be a great poet. The French word **encourage** pushed out the good old English word **hearten**; the Latin word **immigrant** took the place and the function of **comeling**; the Latin word **Continent** is now always used for **mainland**; the Greek word **arithmetic** has quite abolished the use of the simple English word **rimecraft** (=skill in numbers); the French word **despair** has taken the place of **wanhope**, which is now no longer seen; a **wonstead** is now called a **residence**; **earthtilth** has been compelled to give way to the Latin word **agriculture**; the strong English word **learning-knight** (=servant in learning) has had to make room for **disciple**; and the simple English verb **unold** has been driven out by the Latin **rejuvenate.**

(i) When the great George Canning was asked to give the German name for **astronomy**, he replied that he did not know, but that he supposed it must be **twinkle-craft.**

(ii) A poet of the sixteenth century has the line:

'Mind-gladding truth that can unold a man.'

(iii) The hybrid word **starvation** is little more than a hundred years old. It was invented and first used by a Scotsman, a Mr. Dundas, who always went afterwards by the name of 'Starvation Dundas.' He first employed it in a debate in the House of Commons in the year 1775. This and the word **flirtation** were the first two pure English words to have the Latin tail **ation** fitted on to them. Sheridan, in speaking of Mr. Dundas, said that he could pardon all his political sins, but that he 'could not forgive him his persevering opposition to the English Language.'

12. Unless a student has learned Latin, it is often very

difficult to distinguish an English-English from a Latin-English word. Some people think that short words or monosyllables are always pure English. But this is not the case. The familiar words, **plain, clear, please, neat, pure, simple, very,** are not English words at all, they are pure Latin (some of them having been passed through the French mill). Again, the words, **alms, church, bishop, ceiling**—words which have been familiar to us since our childhood, are not English, but Greek.

How are we to know these? How are we to distinguish words which belong to the Latin element from those which are certainly and purely of home-growth—English from the very beginning? It is not easy; but it can be done with a little patience. Let us look at a few of the distinguishing marks.

I. We employ Latin verbs when we use verbs ending in:

(i) **ate,** as assassinate, iterate, perorate, state, etc.
(ii) **ify,** as edify, magnify, signify, etc.
(iii) **ise,** as civilise, colonise, fertilise, etc.
(iv) **ish,** as establish, finish, polish, etc.

II. We employ Latin nouns when we use nouns ending in:

(i) **age,** as advantage, beverage, courage, homage.
Village and *cottage* are hybrids.
(ii) **ance,** as abundance, allegiance, obeisance.
(iii) **ence,** as cadence, prudence, science.
(iv) **ant,** as covenant, giant, merchant, sergeant.
(v) **ar** or **er,** as cellar, mortar; garner, larder.
(vi) **ess** or **ice,** as distress, largess; avarice, cowardice.
(vii) **icle,** as article, particle.
But *icicle* is a pure English word.

(viii) **ine** or **in**, as famine, medicine; cousin, goblin, etc.

(ix) **ist**, as baptist, evangelist, florist, medallist.

(x) **ment**, as commandment, enchantment, nourishment, etc.

But *atonement* (=coming to one again), *acknowledgment*, *bereavement*, *fulfilment* are hybrids; that is, they are English words with Latin tails.

(xi) **on** or **ion**, as falcon, felon, glutton; champion, clarion, etc.

(xii) **sion**, as mansion, pension, passion, vision, etc.

(xiii) **tion**, as benediction, malediction, oration, potion.

(xiv) **tude**, as beatitude, multitude, etc.

(xv) **ty**, as beauty, bounty, charity, cruelty, etc.

(xvi) **ure**, as adventure, creature, nature, nurture, etc.

(xvii) **y**, as copy, family, felony, navy, victory, etc.

III. We employ Latin adjectives when we use adjectives ending in:

(i) **al**, as annual, equal, loyal (or legal), royal (or regal).

(ii) **ant** or **ent**, as errant, rampant; obedient, patient.

(iii) **ary**, as contrary, necessary, secondary, etc.

(iv) **able** or **ible**, as acceptable, abominable, movable; audible, visible.

Breakable, *eatable*, *laughable*, etc., are hybrids.

(v) **esque**, as burlesque, grotesque, picturesque, etc.

(vi) **id**, as acid, pallid, rigid, tepid, turgid, etc.

(vii) **il** or **ile**, as civil, frail (=fragile); sterile, etc.

(viii) **ous**, as copious, curious, famous, omnivorous.

Murderous and *wondrous* are hybrids. *Righteous* is an imitative corruption of the old word *rihtwis*.

13. We might go through the Greek suffixes in the same way; but it is not at all necessary. To know these things is a part of our knowledge of the history and constitution

of the English language; but it is not requisite to keep those points in mind while we are writing English. What is it to the man who is writing about emigration, that the word **colonise** is not an English word; to the man who is discoursing on trade, that the word **merchant** or **commercial** is of Latin-French origin?

14. It is, however, useful to have a clear and adequate knowledge of the different elements in our language, when we are examining what we have written, or when we are criticising the English of others. It enables us to detect wordiness, verbosity, and tautology. Thus Tennyson made merry over the well-known couplet which begins Dr. Johnson's poem of LONDON:—

> Let observation with extended view
> Survey mankind from China to Peru.'

'Why did he not say,' asked Tennyson, '"Let observation, with extended observation, observe extensively"?'

15. Better than a knowledge of all these lists of difference —of distinction between Greek and Latin and English words—is an intimate acquaintance with the best writers of English. To be able to write good and pure English, one must habitually dwell and sympathise with men and women who write English of this character. Any young student who reads and enjoys Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Macaulay, Froude, Stevenson, and other writers of similar rank, will certainly come in time to write good and pure English himself. Imitation—conscious at first—is nine-tenths of the battle; rules and directions are of very minor value compared with intimacy with a good and sensible author.

Paraphrasing

CHAPTER X

PARAPHRASING

1. **Definition.**—A paraphrase is simply a translation; it is a reproduction in which the same thought is expressed in different language. The exercise has two distinct advantages: it enriches and varies our own vocabulary, and it compels us to concentrate our attention on the precise sense in which words are used by the best writers.

2. **Method.**—As a paraphrase is a translation, the very first and most important object is to find out the exact meaning of the passage we have to translate. We must, therefore, read over the passage to be paraphrased as carefully as possible till we think, or are sure, that we have grasped its true and full meaning. Should there be any words we do not understand, the dictionary, and the list of synonyms given there under each word, will help us. Then comes the process of changing the writer's words into one's own. It will not be enough to take the first word or phrase that comes into one's head; such words or phrases will often very inadequately express the original author's meaning or shade of meaning. It will be better to turn over in our mind as many words and phrases as possible, and then select the one which will best convey the proper shade of meaning, and which will join suitably with the other parts of the passage to make

up a harmonious whole. But very often it will happen that the original phrase is the only possible one under the circumstances. In that case it must be allowed to stand; for to alter it might utterly destroy the author's meaning, introduce a tone or a colour quite out of harmony with the other statements, or, perhaps, weaken it into no meaning at all. We must change the word or phrase then, keeping as near as possible to the original sense, but we must at the same time be particularly careful that the words we do select all hang well together and form a rhythmical sentence. In doing this it is not at all necessary that we should slavishly adhere to the construction or the figures of the original model. We can use, if we please, new constructions and new figures, but, in doing so, we must not forget that the two chief things to be kept in view are (1) the original meaning or drift of the passage, and (2) the rhythm.

(i) Variety may occasionally be attained by altering indirect discourse into direct, and *vice versâ*; or by changing a declarative clause or sentence into one of an exclamatory or interrogative form.

(ii) Do not try to change everything. The best paraphrase is not necessarily that in which every word is changed. Endeavour to get the best word for substitution; but if you cannot get one to your mind, or if you can only think of a synonym or alteration which is obviously imperfect, leave the original word or phrase as it is.

3. **Cautions.**—On the other hand, we should not retain the words of the writer we are paraphrasing, except where we cannot help ourselves. The best paraphrase is that which comes nearest to the thought of the original, and leaves the words alone. Hence it may sometimes be a good plan, after reading the passage two or three times

over in order to fix it firmly in the memory, to shut the book altogether, and paraphrase from memory.

We must be careful not to substitute for the word the mere definition of the word itself. Doing this may lead to ludicrous nonsense,—for example, the paraphrasing of 'foxglove' into 'handsome biennial plant,' and the changing 'the tawny songster of the grove' into 'the singing bird of a dark yellowish colour that inhabits the cluster of trees.'

Lastly, when paraphrasing poetry into prose, we should be careful not to retain any archaic or unusual words that are admissible in poetry, and study to avoid any semblance of rhyming jingle. It will often be necessary in this kind of paraphrasing to make considerable changes in construction, as many poetical constructions would seem out of place or affected in a prose passage.

4. The following are the rules laid down by Sir Joshua Fitch in his 'Lectures on Teaching':—

Rule I.—Do not think you have to find an equivalent for every word. Read the whole passage and turn it over in the mind; keep in view its drift and general purport, and catch the *thought* in preference to the *language*. Then re-write it so as to convey the *collective meaning* of the passage, not a mere *translation of its words*.

Rule II.—Do not be afraid of using the same word, if it is clearly the best, and an equivalent cannot be found.

Rule III.—Be sure that the sentences are short and simple. Break up *long and involved* passages into *shorter ones*, and combine disconnected ones by the use of suitable conjunctions. Guard with special care against the vicious use of relatives, participles, and frequency of connective words such as 'and,' 'so,' 'but,' etc.

RULE IV.—Never use *two words* where one would suffice to convey your thoughts; nor a *hard word* where an *easy one* would convey your meaning. At the same time, in dealing with very concise writers it is not necessary to try to make the paraphrase as short as the original.

RULE V.—Do not translate all the metaphors, or all the poetry into prose. A slight change of figurative language is quite legitimate as long as the meaning is preserved.

RULE VI.—Keep in mind the *general style* of the extract, and if it be *grave or playful,* maintain its character as far as you can. In conclusion, be careful that the result shall be a perfectly *readable* piece of English which would be *intelligible to those who had no knowledge of the original.*

5. The following are examples of different styles of paraphrasing. Some are close to the original; some are free. Some are simple; some, elaborate and expanded; others are less so. The young student, after careful reading and examination, will soon come to see why this or that style is more appropriate in each case; and why it is now and then necessary for the writer paraphrasing to demand and to obtain greater freedom for himself.

SUNRISE IN LONDON

The sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care—
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den,
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O! what scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream;
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch and soothes his feeble wail.

SCOTT, 'Lady of the Lake.'

The sun, now rising, casts a sullen beam through the smoky air of the dark city. He rouses each workman to his daily work—to that task which is the sad inheritance of sinful man. He summons revellers from the dance that now begins to lag; he scares the prowling robber back to his den; he gilds the lance of the warder on the battlements of the castle; he warns the pale student to lay down his pen and give his drowsy eyes to sleep—the kindly nurse of us all. What scenes of various kinds! What scenes of woe, too, are witnessed by that red beam which struggles through the smoke! The fevered patient, from his low cot, sees it stream past the beds of the crowded hospital. The debtor wakes up to the thought and the possibility of fetters and the jail. The wakeful mother trims, by the pale glimmer, the cradle of her sick infant, and soothes and hushes his weak cries.

THE VALUE OF WORK

O mortal man, who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;
And, certes, there is for it reason great,
For, though sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
And curse thy stars, and early drudge and late,
Withouten that would come an heavier bale—
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

THOMSON, 'Castle of Indolence.'

O mortal man, that livest in this world by toil, do not complain of the hardness of thy condition! That thou art compelled, like an ant, to labour without ceasing is a sad sentence passed upon thee long, long ago. And, beyond all question, there is for this sentence the best of reasons; for, although now and then it makes thee weep and complain, and curse thy fate, and drudge from morning till night, without it, heavier misfortune would come upon thee —the misery of a loose life, of unregulated passions, of diseases that would undermine thy frame.

THE HAPPIEST TIME OF LIFE

Laid in my quiet bed in study as I were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts appear.
And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes,
That now I sighed, and then I smiled, as cause of thoughts did rise.
I saw the little boy, in thought how oft that he
Did wish of God, to 'scape the rod, a tall young man to be.
The young man eke, that feels his bones with pains oppressed,
How he would be a rich old man to live and lie at rest.
The rich old man that sees his end draw on so sore,
How would he be a boy again to live so much the more.
Whereat full oft I smiled, to see how all these three,
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop[1] and change degree.

EARL OF SURREY.

As I lay meditating in my quiet bed, I saw many thoughts make their entrance into my puzzled brain. And every thought appeared so living to me that at one time I sighed, at another I smiled, as the thoughts and the causes of them rose up. I saw in thought the little boy—how he often wished that God would make him a tall young man, so that

[1] Shift.

he might escape the rod. Then the young man, too, when he feels his limbs full of pains, wishes that he were a rich old man, that he might live in peace and quiet. The rich old man, again, who sees his end very near at hand, thinks how good it would be to be a boy again, so that he might have longer to live. At all this I smiled frequently—to see how all these would be glad to chop and change about from man to boy and from boy to man.

THE CROFTER

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere Britain's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

GOLDSMITH'S 'Deserted Village.'

[SIMPLE]

Ill fares the land—a prey to ills that crowd upon each other, where wealth is heaped up and industrious men die out. Princes and lords may flourish and may decay:—the breath of a sovereign can make them now, as it has done before; but a bold and hard-working peasantry—the pride of their country, if once allowed to disappear, can never be restored to the land they have left.

There was once a time—before these sad occurrences, when Britain counted a peasant-farmer to every rood of land. His labour was light, and it brought him enough for

health; it gave him all that life required—and no more: his best companions were innocence and good health; his best riches, ignorance of luxury and the too much.

HOLLOW PROSPERITY

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage and hounds:
Around the world each needful product flies
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

GOLDSMITH, 'Deserted Village.'

[MORE ELABORATE]

Ye who think and follow where truth leads, ye statesmen who see the pleasures of the rich man increasing in the country and the simple joys of the poor withering and decaying, it is for you to judge how vast is the difference between splendour and happiness. Ships freighted with valuable ores go up to the port on a swelling tide, which seems proud to bear them, and foolish people shout welcome to them from the shore; hoards beyond even the dreams of

avarice abound in the country, and from all parts of the world come rich men to grow richer. Only count our gains, however. The proud and rich man occupies a space that gave house-room to crowds of poor folk—space for his lake, for his park, to which he is constantly adding,—for his horses, his carriages, his hounds. He sends round the world for every luxury that the world can supply, while the country of which he is a citizen, changed into the mere instrument of his pleasure, and doomed to fall, awaits, though clothed in barren splendour, its tragic destiny.

THE AMERICAN INDIAN'S HOPES

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds or hears Him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire—
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

POPE'S 'Essay on Man.'

[SEMI-ELABORATE]

Let us consider for a moment the case of the poor Indian. His untrained mind sees God in the clouds or hears Him in the passage of the wind. Science in its pride never taught his soul to lift itself to the contemplation of the Solar System or to study the phenomena of the Milky Way; and

simple Nature has taught him to set his hopes on a humbler heaven—on a heaven that lies behind his cloud-topped hills, or in some safer world that lies among deep woods, or in some happy, solitary island far off amid the waste of waters, where slaves visit once more the land of their birth, where fiends cannot torment them, where Christians cannot rob them of their gold. Mere existence is enough for him: he asks neither the wing of the angel, nor the fire of the seraph; but he thinks that, when he is admitted to that heaven of equal rights, he will have his faithful dog as his constant companion.

LIBERTY

Thee, goddess, thee Britannia's isle adores:
How has she oft exhausted all her stores,
How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,
Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought!
On foreign mountains, may the sun refine
The grape's soft juice, and mellow it to wine,
With citron groves adorn a distant soil,
And the fat olive swell with floods of oil:
We envy not the warmer clime, that lies
In ten degrees of more indulgent skies,
Nor at the coarseness of our heaven repine,
Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine:
'Tis liberty, that crowns Britannia's isle,
And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.

ADDISON, 'Letter from Italy.'

[EXPANDED]

It is thou, O goddess, it is thou whom Britain's isle is proud to worship and adore. How often has she expended all her wealth, all her resources, how often has she sought thy ennobling presence on the field of battle, nor looked upon the

mighty prize as bought too dear at the cost of blood and death! Let the bright sun of foreign countries ripen the juice of the grape upon their hills; let the soil of other lands be adorned with citron groves; let the rich olive-trees give floods of oil to the Italian farmer; we do not envy the warmer and more genial clime, that lies ten degrees farther south and under kindlier skies, nor do we complain of the coarse blasts of our own climate, though the chilly Pleiads shine above our heads: it is LIBERTY that crowns this island of Britain, and makes her barren rocks and her bleak hills and mountains smile in the eyes of her children!

ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE AT SUNRISE

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep,
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

WORDSWORTH, 'Sonnet.'

[CLOSE]

Earth cannot show a more beautiful sight than this! Dull would the man be who could pass without regarding a sight so majestic, so touching! The beauty of the morning enfolds the city like a garment: ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples stand silent, strong in the clear light,

bright and glittering in the smokeless air. Never did valley, rock, or hill look more beautiful when steeped in the first splendour of the morning sun; never did I see, never did I feel so deep a calm! The river glides along in soft tranquillity; the very houses seem asleep; and all that mighty heart of London is still and at rest.

THE VANITY OF HUMAN GREATNESS

In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the Church, the realm, their powers consign;
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine;
Turned by his nod the stream of honour flows;
His smile alone security bestows:
At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye;
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppressed
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.
Grief aids disease; remembered folly stings.
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.

DR. JOHNSON.

[ELABORATE]

Behold the full-blown greatness of Cardinal Wolsey! His voice is law; wealth and rank are at his call. To him the Church and the State have intrusted all their powers; it is through him that the favours and bounty of the King pass to his subjects. At his suggestion honours are conferred on one, and refused to another; it is his smile alone that can give security to life or to estate. At length the favour of his sovereign leaves him: the train of courtiers have observed the glance of dislike, and are alert for the signal to show their hatred. And now, wherever he turns,

the eye he meets is the eye of a stranger; men who were once suppliants now scorn him, men who followed now flee from him. Sinking under age, under cares, under disease, he seeks refuge and rest in a monastery. Grief seconds the ravages of disease; the recollection of his folly stings his heart; and his dying sighs are the accusation and the condemnation of the faith of kings.

HOW TO DEFEAT SORROW

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus;
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the king did banish thee,
But thou the king. Woe doth the heavier sit
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour
And not the king exiled thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou comest:
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strewed,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance;
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

SHAKESPEARE, 'Richard II.'

[BRIEF]

All places that the sun looks upon are, to the wise man, ports to steer for and havens to rest in. Learn to reason thus—learn from thy necessity—which is after all the highest virtue. Imagine that thou hast banished the king,

not that the king has banished thee. Misery sits heavier on the man who cannot bear it strongly! Go and say that thou wert sent out by me in pursuit of honour, and not that thou wert exiled by the king! Or imagine that a destroying pestilence is hovering in our air and that thou art flying to some purer and healthier climate! Consider, and imagine that all thy soul holds dear is to be found in the way thou art going, not in the country thou art leaving! Fancy that the singing birds are musicians, that the grass thou walkest on is the presence-chamber of the king, that the flowers are fair ladies of the court, and that thy steps are a musical measure or a delightful dance; for gnawing sorrow has less power to pain the man that mocks at it and sets light by it.

6. The following exercises consist of short epigrams in verse to be turned into clear and vigorous prose. The verse is printed in prose-lines, so that the reader's eye may catch the sense more quickly. The paraphrasing may be carried out on a large scale; but it is of the utmost importance that the pith of the epigram should be given in as pithy a manner and in as few words as possible. Take the first exercise: it might be done in this fashion:—

'Tom is a man of weak character. He is always wavering, always in a fright. What is he in a fright about? He is afraid of doing wrong. And so, in fear of doing wrong, he succeeds in doing nothing right.'

1. On a Timid Character

Tom, weak and wavering, ever in a fright lest he do something wrong, does nothing right.

2. Politeness and Wit

As in smooth oil the razor best is whet, so wit is by

politeness sharpest set; their want of edge from their offence is seen, both pain in heart when exquisitely keen.

3. On a Slanderous Diner-out

You never dine at home at all, but sponge upon your friends, and, when you speak, the poison'd stream of slander never ends. So we may say that day by day, on this or that pretence, your mouth you never open but at other men's expense.

4. Number One

Here lies a man who into highest station, by dint of bribes and arts, contrived to slide; and ne'er one service rendered to the nation, except the lucky day on which he died.

5. Perhaps we are both mistaken

Thou speakest always ill of me, but I always speak well of thee. But spite of all our noise and pother, the world believes nor one nor t'other.

6. The Mouse to the Miser

A miser in his chamber saw a mouse, and cried, dismay'd, 'What dost thou in my house?' She with a laugh, 'Good landlord, have no fear, 'tis not for board, but lodging, I came here.'

7. A Mixed Character

In all thy humour, whether grave or mellow, thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow; hast so much wit, and mirth, and spleen about thee, there is no living with thee, or without thee.

8. An Idler

Here lies one who was born and cried, told threescore years and then he died. His greatest actions that we find, were that he wash'd his hands and din'd.

9. Two Kinds of Craft

In Craven Street, Strand, ten attorneys find place, and ten dark coal-barges are moored at its base: fly, Honesty, fly, to some safer retreat; there's *craft* in the river and *craft* in the street.

The THAMES no longer comes up to the foot of Craven Street. The Victoria Embankment now stretches between it and the river.

10. The Reply

Why should Honesty seek any safer retreat from the lawyers or barges, odd-rot-'em? For the lawyers are *just* at the top of the street, and the barges are *just* at the bottom!

11. What Each needed most

The king to Oxford sent a troop of horse, for Tories own no argument but force; with equal skill to Cambridge books he sent, for Whigs admit no force but argument.

12. Speeches and an Hour-glass

Vane's speeches to an hour-glass do some resemblance show; because the longer time they run the shallower they grow.

13. On Butler's Statue

Whilst Butler, needy wretch! was yet alive, no gen'rous patron would a dinner give: see him, when starved to death, and turn'd to dust, presented with a monumental bust! The poet's fate is here in emblem shown—he ask'd for bread, and he receiv'd a stone.

SAMUEL BUTLER (1612-1680), the author of 'Hudibras,' died of consumption in great poverty.

14. America and England

John Bull and Brother Jonathan each other ought to greet; they've always been extravagant, but now 'make both ends meet.'

This was written on the occasion of the laying of the Atlantic Cable in 1866.

15. The Invasion of England by Napoleon (1804)

Says Boney to Johnny, 'I'm coming to Dover;' says Johnny to Boney, 'You're better at home;' says Boney to Johnny, 'I mean to come over;' says Johnny to Boney, 'You'll be overcome.'

Napoleon had prepared a flotilla at Boulogne for the invasion of England. He was so certain of success that he had the die for a medal prepared with the words 'Frappé à Londres.'

16. On Miss Edgeworth's Writings

We everyday bards may 'Anonymous' sign; that refuge, Miss Edgeworth, can never be thine. Thy writings, where satire and moral unite, must bring forth the name of their author to light. Good and bad join in telling the source of their birth, the bad own their edge, and the good own their worth.

17. On Quin the Actor

That tongue which set the table in a roar, and charm'd the public ear, is heard no more; clos'd are those eyes, the harbingers of wit, which spoke, before the tongue, what Shakespeare writ; cold are those hands which, living, were stretched forth at friendship's call to succour modest worth. Here lies James Quin. Deign, reader, to be taught (whate'er thy strength of body, force of thought, in Nature's happier mould however cast) to this complexion thou must come at last. David Garrick (1716-79).

18. On the Countess of Pembroke

Underneath this sable hearse lies the subject of all verse, Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;—Death, ere thou hast slain another fair and learn'd and good as she, Time shall throw his dart at thee.

19. Lines under Milton's Picture

Three poets, in three distant ages born, Greece, Italy, and England did adorn; the first in loftiness of thought surpass'd, the next in majesty, in both the last. The force of Nature

could no further go; to make a third she join'd the former two. JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1701).

20. FOREKNOWLEDGE NOT VERY USEFUL

If a man might know the ill he must undergo, and shun it so, then it were good to know. But if he undergo it, though he know it, what boots him know it? He must undergo it. SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-41).

21. A DECISIVE ARGUMENT

By one decisive argument Giles gain'd his lovely Kate's consent to fix the bridal day. 'Why in such haste, dear Giles, to wed? I shall not change my mind,' she said,—'But then,' says he, 'I may.'

22. ON A MISER

Here crumbling lies, beneath this mould, a man whose sole delight was gold. Content was never once his guest, though thrice ten thousand fill'd his chest; for he, poor man, with all his store, died in great want—the want of more.

23. LAWYERS AND CLIENTS

Two lawyers, when a knotty case was o'er, shook hands and were as good friends as before. 'Say,' cried the losing client, 'how come you to be such friends who were such foes just now?' 'Thou fool,' one answers, 'lawyers, tho' so keen, like shears, ne'er cut themselves, but what's between.'

24. A KING ASLEEP IN CHURCH

Old South, a witty Churchman reckon'd, was preaching once to Charles the Second. He soon perceiv'd his audience nod, deaf to the zealous man of God. The Doctor stopp'd; began to call, 'Pray, wake the Earl of Lauderdale: my lord! why, 'tis a monstrous thing! You snore so loud, you 'll wake the King!'

Pith

CHAPTER XI

PITH

1. Pith.—We have seen what paraphrasing is, and have probably learned how to paraphrase. There is another exercise similar in character; and that is to give the essence—or the quintessence—of a passage, whether in prose or in poetry. If we take, for example, the passage from GOLDSMITH on 'Hollow Prosperity' (p. 142), we can resolve its main statements—its most important positions—into three or four. These are:—

(i) There is a great difference between splendour and happiness.

(ii) Wealth may have become great; but the products that are useful to a country may not have been increased.

(iii) The man of wealth fills a space that might have supported a multitude of poor.

(iv) The country, filled with barren splendour, totters to its fall.

2. Purpose.—The purpose of this exercise is to get at the meaning of the writer, and to set it forth in as brief a manner as possible. This enables the mind to clear away the less important details, and to set every statement in its proper rank and in due perspective. We thus come to see what the innermost thought of the writer is. And, when we have discovered this, we are in

a condition to estimate its value—to know whether it is true or not. For we have stripped it of all its ornamentation, of all qualifying and limiting clauses, of all verbiage, and compelled it to stand out alone in its own strength.

3. **Another Example.**—Let it be proposed to give the pith of Tennyson's well-known and much-recited 'Charge of the Light Brigade.' Then it would probably came out in the following fashion:—

(i) The six hundred men who formed the Light Brigade galloped up a valley in the Crimea.

(ii) Their commander ordered them to charge the Russian battery at the head of the valley. The valley was a Valley of Death.

(iii) The soldiers knew that a blunder had been made; but they rode on.

(iv) There were cannon on each flank, and cannon in front of them also. Through a tempest of shot and shell they rode right into the jaws of death.

(v) The English cavalry sabred the Russian gunners—charged indeed a whole army, to the astonishment of the world. They rode straight through the Russian battery, breaking up the Cossack and Russian lines.

(vi) Then they rode back again—but no longer the six hundred.

(vii) As they rode back, they were again fired on with shot and shell; and when they joined their comrades once more, they were only a miserable fragment.

How to Write an Essay

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

1. **Material.**—It is first of all necessary to collect the requisite material. Let us suppose that the young student is called upon to write an essay on William the Third. He will naturally and properly read up the accounts of this monarch and statesman in Macaulay, in Green, in the Dictionary of National Biography, and in any other sources that happen to be open to him. He will take special notice of the chief events that have occurred in his life, of the great deeds he performed, and of the most striking qualities in his character. The next step is to endeavour to form a clear idea of the whole man, and to put into this idea the necessary condition of unity. This is best done by quiet thinking about the man and his circumstances, meditating over the whole subject during a walk, and trying to 'realise' him—that is, to make him for the mind as real a personage as if we were actually acquainted with him in life.

2. **Plan.**—The next step is to draw up a plan of the Essay; and we must be careful to put every detail in its proper place, and give it only its due importance. In other words, we must see that our plan is in right perspective. Again, while reading for the Essay, it is a good thing to collect as many really telling phrases as we can from the authors we read. These will probably

hit the mark more nearly than the ordinary essayist can; but the writer must be careful to put them within quotation marks. In all subjects—biographical, historic, general—it is of great importance to find out what is striking, what is genuinely characteristic, what is unique, —and to give prominence to that. The minor and ordinary details will readily fall into their own places.

3. Practical Suggestions.—It is important, in every examination, to use one's common-sense, to believe that the examiner has common-sense as well as experience, and to produce upon his mind and judgment the best impression that you possibly can. To this end there are several quite simple means: (i) Write quite legibly as well as neatly. (ii) Never exceed the maximum of words or pages allowed: rather keep within the mark. (iii) Choose the subject you feel you can treat best, or choose, if you can discuss it, the most difficult subject of those that are offered you by the examiner. (iv) Never employ stupid abbreviations. (v) Make your paragraphs as short as possible.

(i) You write legibly, out of respect for the examiner; you write neatly, out of respect for yourself. Workmanship of every kind should be neat and finished. Very able examinees often get poor marks, because their handwriting is so difficult to make out. It is also politic—and sensible—to keep the harassed examiner in good humour.

(ii) What the examiner wants is a short, carefully finished essay, written in a clear and compact fashion; and not a large number of words and phrases thrown down in random fashion before him. Still less does he require exuberant eloquence, which it is a weariness to read, and a difficulty to mark.

(iii) If you choose the easiest subject, you are one in a

crowd of several hundreds. Reading over and over again the same statements, the same ideas, the same stock phrases, the examiner becomes wearied, jaded, and even disgusted. His judgment grows stale, and refuses to act. If a difficult subject is selected, you are one in a choice company of some twenty or thirty. The subject is new; the handling of it is probably fresh; and, it may be, in some cases, possibly original. Mere man as he is, the examiner is grateful to be taken from the dusty high-road (where the small grit of commonplaces flies through the air and gets into his mental eyesight) and to be led into 'fresh woods and pastures new.'

(iv) Avoid such abbreviations as **wh.** for *which*, **wd.** for *would*, **exam.** for *examination*; and do not use & for *and*. It is slovenly to write 17 for *seventeen*, unless, indeed, it be a date. All these habits look as if the writer were in a hurry. There is no need to be in a hurry: 'you have all the time there is.' And hurried work is always scamped work.

(v) Short paragraphs are easy to get the sense of. A road with many turnings is always more interesting and more pleasant than a long, unbroken line of turnpike. (A new paragraph should begin with the first word about an inch to the right.)

4. **Outlines.**—In writing essays on the basis of the following outlines, it is not at all necessary to keep to the order of development. The student is at complete liberty to strike out a path for himself, and to follow his own order. Again, it would probably be better to fill out—or write on—only one-third or one-fourth of the whole essay. It is better to write ten or twelve lines in good, clear, firm English than to expatiate over a page or two in loose, abundant, and unpruned composition.

SHORT ESSAYS IN OUTLINE

(BIOGRAPHICAL)

SIR SAMUEL BAKER

I. This great African explorer was born in London in 1821.

(i) Early life in Ceylon. Did much to promote the agriculture of the island.

(ii) Organised the first railway in Turkey in 1855.

II. The discovery of the sources of the Nile.

(i) In 1863, just after Speke and Grant discovered the Victoria Nyanza, Baker, accompanied by his wife, discovered and named the Albert Nyanza.

(ii) 'There is no longer,' he wrote, 'any mystery connected with the Nile. . . . The honour of discovery happily belongs to England.'

III. Governor of the Soudan.

In 1869 the Khedive of Egypt sent him to annex the Soudan. He put down the slave-trade for a time, established regular commerce in its stead, and pushed the dominion of Egypt down to the Great Lakes.

IV. He died at his house in Devonshire, 30th December 1893.

(i) Like another great traveller—Odysseus—he had seen many men and cities, having travelled besides in Syria, India, Japan, and America.

(ii) He was at once a great organiser, a great traveller, and a mighty hunter. Besides the accounts of his travels and explorations, which are many, his book on 'Wild Beasts and their Ways' is the work of an intrepid sportsman and an accurate and painstaking natural observer.

BORROW, THE LAVENGRO

I. GEORGE BORROW was born at East Dereham in Norfolk in 1803.

(i) He was educated at the Grammar School of Norwich, and also at the Royal High School of Edinburgh.
(ii) His chief education was obtained from some gypsies who were encamped on a heath near Norwich. From them he obtained the title of 'Lavengro' or Word-Master.

II. He was in 1818 articled to a firm of solicitors.

(i) During this time he discovered his great talent for languages, and picked up a knowledge of French and German, Latin and Greek, Danish, Irish and Welsh, and 'Romany'—the language of the gypsies, by whom he was almost adopted.
(ii) On his father's death in 1824 he left the law and came up to London to seek his fortune. He 'found' it as a bookseller's hack-writer.
(iii) He next took to wandering about England as a gypsy.

III. In 1833 he entered the service of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

(i) He was sent to St. Petersburg, where he edited the New Testament in the Mantchu or Chinese-Tartar language.
(ii) He also visited Portugal, Spain, and Morocco.

IV. In 1843 he published 'The Bible in Spain,' one of the most intensely interesting works in the English language.

V. In 1844 he wandered among the gypsies of Hungary, Wallachia, and Turkey.

(i) 'Lavengro,' which contains an account of his early life and adventures, was published in 1851.
(ii) He wrote several other books: among the best, 'Zincali, the Gypsies of Spain.'

VI. He died at Oulton, near Lowestoft, in 1881.

CHARLES GORDON

I. Born at Woolwich in 1830.

(i) After passing through the Military Academy at Woolwich, he entered the Royal Engineers in 1852.
(ii) He served in the siege of Sebastopol in 1855-56.

II. In 1863 he was appointed by the Chinese Government to the command of a Chinese army (the 'Ever Victorious Army'), officered by Europeans, for the purpose of suppressing the Taiping rebellion.

(i) He fought thirty-three actions, and took many walled towns.
(ii) This success placed the young major of engineers in the front rank of the generals of the day.

III. He was offered large sums of money and many jewels as a reward: he declined them all.

(i) He left China in 1865 as poor as when he entered it.
(ii) He spent the next six years at Gravesend, doing engineer duty, but giving his spare time to the poor—'feeding the hungry, and clothing the waifs and strays.'

IV. In 1873 he accepted employment under the Khedive.

(i) His work was to open up the regions of the equatorial Nile.
(ii) He placed steamers on the Nile, and also on Albert Nyanza.

V. In 1877 he was Governor of the whole SOUDAN.

(i) His province extended from the Second Cataract to the Great Lakes, and from the Red Sea to Lake Chad.
(ii) In 1880 he resigned this post, for good reasons.

VI. In 1884 he was requested by the British Government to extricate the Egyptian garrisons from amongst the revolted natives.

(i) He made his way almost alone to Khartoum.
(ii) A month after, Khartoum was invested by the Mahdi.

VII. A relief expedition was organised in England.

(i) The siege of Khartoum had gone on for five months.
(ii) The expedition took two months to ascend the Nile.

VIII. The Expedition arrived too late.

(i) Khartoum had fallen two days before (Jan. 1885).
(ii) Gordon was killed and his head carried to the Mahdi.
(iii) His journal was found; and it is a record of heroic courage, faith, perseverance, and humility.

HENRY M. STANLEY

I. Stanley is a Welshman by birth, though generally considered an American. Now once more a re-naturalised British subject.

(i) Was born of poor parents near Denbigh in 1841. Real name Rowlands.

(ii) Shipped as a cabin-boy to New Orleans, and fought both in the Confederate and Federal armies during the Civil War. Adopted by a wealthy merchant of the name of Stanley. Through the war he began to make his name as a war correspondent.

II. 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume.'

In 1869 he received a telegram from his newspaper chief, Gordon Bennett, of the New York Herald, 'Find Livingstone.' Two years later he found him at Ujiji. The two then explored the north end of L. Tanganyika, and proved it had nothing to do with the Nile basin.

III. His first crossing of Africa, 1874-77.

The greatest of his journeys. Reaches Victoria Nyanza with a large force, and circumnavigates the lake. Forced back by starvation to Ujiji, then westwards to Nyangwe on the great river Congo or Lualaba, which Livingstone believed to be the Nile. The first man to descend the Congo to its mouth with a loss of 35 out of 150 natives, and one Englishman.

IV. Relief of Emin Pasha, 1886.

After terrible loss of life and the death of Major Barttelot, whom he had left behind with his rear column, half of which died of starvation, he finally brought back Emin to the east coast.

V. As an explorer, great and successful; as a writer, tedious and prolix.

'Through the Dark Continent,' probably his best book. Now a Member of Parliament for Lambeth.

SHORT ESSAYS IN OUTLINE

(TOWNS AND CITIES)

BIRMINGHAM

I. The town and its history.

II. Stands near the centre of England and spreads into Staffordshire and Worcestershire.

(i) The name means the home of the Bermings (a Saxon clan). Rather irregularly built, with many narrow and winding streets.

(ii) Few cities so rich in institutions for the promotion of education or the development of the arts and sciences. Note Mason's College and the various grammar-schools of King Edward the Sixth's foundation.

III. History an uneventful one. Peaceful industry has been its lot.

(i) During the Civil War supplied the Parliamentarians with swords, for which it was attacked and captured by Prince Rupert in 1643.

(ii) Suffered heavily from the plague of 1665-66. Always prominent in political movements. Headquarters of the Chartist agitators, and, within recent years, of the Liberal Unionists.

IV. Famed all the world over for its metallic manufactures.

(i) Birmingham referred to as an abode of 'smiths and cutlers' in 1538. The saying 'makes anything from a steel-pen to a steam-engine' not quite correct.

(ii) Outrivalled in cutlery now by Sheffield, but unrivalled in the finer kinds of metal manufactures—gold, silver, copper, brass, etc. Much sham jewellery; hence the term, 'Brummagem ware.'

(iii) Small arms a specialty. Note the complaint from Birmingham as to the British seizure of rifles in the Persian Gulf in 1897.

LIVERPOOL

I. Position for commerce unrivalled.

(i) Stands on a navigable estuary, at the back of the greatest industrial district in England, faces Ireland and America, has railway communication with all parts of Great Britain. Has thus become the greatest export port in Great Britain, especially with the west.

'Westward the course of commerce takes its way.'

(ii) Progress extraordinary, from 77,000 people in 1800 to 630,000 in 1898. Cause: growth of cotton industry. Inland trade much augmented by opening of Bridgwater Canal in 1771. Cf. Manchester Ship-Canal.

II. The docks are second only to those of London.

(i) Make a greater show than the London docks, stretching for miles on both banks of the Mersey.

(ii) Some of the docks regarded as among the greatest engineering triumphs of the nineteenth century. Liverpool and Birkenhead together collect annual dock-dues of £1,250,000. This was one reason for making Manchester Ship-Canal.

III. The trade of the town.

(i) Leading port in the West African trade. Traded in slaves up to 1807.

(ii) Liverpool does one-third of our foreign commerce. Exports manufactures, and imports (from Ireland and America) breadstuffs, meats, and above all cotton. Note the cotton-famine during the American Civil War of 1861-65, and the blockade-runners.

IV. The town.

Many fine thoroughfares and spacious warehouses and offices. Liverpool is commercial, but is educational too. University College. Exchange a stately building, but the cotton-brokers, according to long custom, meet in the open air, on the 'flags.'

SHORT ESSAYS IN OUTLINE

(MISCELLANEOUS)

ATHLETICS

I. A sound mind in a sound body.

(i) The interaction of body and mind is one of the commonest experiences. No one can afford to neglect the laws of health, and one law is, 'Take exercise.'

(ii) Exercise most readily and pleasantly taken through some form of athletics.

(iii) Some advantages of particular sports—bicycling, cricket, rowing, etc.

II. Disciplinary influence.

(i) Teaches the power of union and combination. Important position occupied by a captain of a cricket or football team; cultivates decision of character and sense of responsibility. Great judgment required of a 'stroke' in a boat-race.

(ii) Nearly every great nation has given time to athletics—all Teutonic races, the Greeks, and the Romans. The conqueror at the Olympic games in ancient Greece hailed as the hero of the hour.

III. The abuse of athletics.

(i) Tendency to carry them to excess. To cultivate a mere muscular animal is not the true aim. Strike for the golden mean. Too often the biggest figure in a school is the mere athlete. Dr. Arnold's 'Muscular Christianity.' Athletics not to be insisted on in the case of weakly children.

(ii) Spread of professionalism in games to be deprecated. Leads to a lowering of tone, brutal and unfair play, and gambling. These are not the qualities of true sport.

OUR COALING-STATIONS

I. NECESSARY both in peace and in war.

(i) At all times there is £144,000,000 worth of British property afloat on the high seas. This is chiefly carried in steamers, and all but the great liners must be enabled to coal frequently.

(ii) Even more necessary for men-of-war, for their effective 'striking distance' is between 2000 and 3000 miles. Cf. the difficulty of the Confederate ships in 1861-65, and of the Spanish ships in 1898, in obtaining coal. Neutral harbours practically closed to combatants except for very small supplies.

II. Two great trade routes going East.

That through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal, and that round the Cape, to India, Australasia, and the East generally.

III. Suez Canal route.

(i) Britain holds the keys of the Mediterranean and of the Red Sea. Aden and Perim make the Red Sea a British lake.

(ii) Eastward, past Bombay and Colombo, to Singapore. Singapore the (strongly fortified) gate to the East Indies and China. Importance of Hong-Kong as a trade-entrepôt and coaling-station, and of Wei-hai-wei.

IV. The Cape route.

Highly important, because in war the Suez Canal could be blocked for weeks in a few minutes. Cape menaced by French possession of Madagascar.

V. Route westwards straight on.

Coaling-stations at the end of it, at Barbadoes, the Bermudas, Halifax, etc.

VI. Britain an island, and therefore a naval power.

(i) Deprive us of our navy and our commerce is gone.

(ii) Therefore girdle the world with coaling-stations. Then our navy will be provided with fuel, commerce will continue to increase, and we shall have safe bases from which to attack or defend.

TALENT AND CHARACTER

I. 'TALENT is formed in solitude and tranquillity; CHARACTER in the rush and shock of the world of men.'—GOETHE.

II. 'Talent is the capacity of doing anything that depends on application and industry. . . . Talent differs from genius as voluntary differs from involuntary power.' —HAZLITT.

III. 'Dryden's qualities and faculties were in that rare combination that makes character. This gave flavour to whatever he wrote.'—LOWELL.

IV. Talent is formed by patient attention, by unwearying study.

(i) Talent gets hold of all the details of a subject.

(ii) It requires a quiet studio, a tranquil working-place.

(iii) 'Fools and children ought not to see a work half done'; the careful workman avoids letting such persons see his work in the making.

V. Character is always practical; it depends on the education and strengthening of the will.

VI. Hence character is formed in struggle and fight.

(i) It knows when to wait. 'BYDAND' is the motto of the Gordon Highlanders.

(ii) Life is the great school of character.

THE VOLUNTEERS

I. How they arose.

(i) Threatening attitude of France caused them to spring into existence in 1859. Great Britain then showed that, though she is not a military nation, she is at bottom a warlike race.

(ii) At first volunteers found everything — uniform, arms, accoutrements, military instruction, etc. Thus the great bulk of the force was drawn from the moneyed and well-to-do classes. But gradually the wave of military enthusiasm sank to rest. The more prosperous classes dropped out of it, and it became, as it is to-day, practically a working-man's force, for which the Government finds everything.

II. What the volunteers have done for the nation and themselves.

(i) Have dispelled the dread of a great standing army, the bugbear of the English people since the Restoration.

(ii) Have shown the electorate that soldiers of some kind are necessary for the existence of Great Britain. 'Defence, not defiance,' is the volunteers' motto.

(iii) Have popularised the regular army for recruiting purposes.

(iv) Have pressed home the great lesson of patriotism, that it is the duty of every citizen, if need be, to fight for his country.

(v) The movement has called into existence a body of 250,000 young men, who can share, without interference to their work, in the estimable boon of discipline. Drills and training supply the much-needed holiday to those who might not otherwise get it. Steadiness, obedience, self-control, physical development, sobriety must all be the qualities of a successful volunteer.

Précis-Writing

CHAPTER XIII

PRÉCIS-WRITING

1. The word précis[1] means literally a 'pruned or cut-down statement'; and précis-writing is therefore simply the art of pruning, or making summaries. A précis is a compressed and condensed statement of the substance of a long series of communications, of a letter, or of a narrative. As in paraphrasing, so in précis-writing, it is before all things necessary to arrive at the clearest understanding of the meaning or drift of the passage or letter under notice. When this is reached, the next step is to condense. Search for the pith—the material points—of the matter, and set them down in the fewest possible words, being, at the same time, particularly careful that the meaning is absolutely clear, and that your précis reads well. No special rules can be given for précis-writing. Success in the art will depend on the writer's power of grasping the essential points, of setting them down clearly and in the fewest words, and of leaving out everything that interferes with a clear understanding of the whole subject. Success, in fact, depends on two things only: common sense and much practice. Care should always be taken that the précis reads well, and that the different points should be arranged in a proper sequence.

2. Some of the best examples of précis-writing are to

[1] Pronounced 'praycee.'

be found in the summaries of newspapers—the short digest of news that generally appears just in front of the leading articles. Many men have no time to read more of their newspapers than this (apart from any special subject in which they may be interested). And therefore it is that in the best papers these summaries are most carefully done and entrusted to well-practised and highly-paid writers. The news they contain furnishes the reader with a brief yet comprehensive knowledge of the affairs and events of the day. The student will find it good practice to take a newspaper account of some important current event—say of the great battle of Omdurman—condense it, and then compare his condensation with the summary given in the newspaper in which the account has been given.

3. The art of making summaries is useful both in general composition and in all matters which relate to business or official administration. To the private student it is a great advantage to be able to compile brief yet readable notes of anything he may be studying. Similarly, the business man and the official find it of immense use to employ subordinates who are able to set out clearly the pith of a long letter or series of communications. The head of an office, commercial or official, is thus saved the trouble of wading through a great mass of undigested matter.

4. The following are the recommendations for précis-writing, made by the Civil Service Commission to candidates who seek Civil Service appointments: 'The object of the memorandum or précis, *which should be in the form of a narrative*, is that any one, who had not time to read the original letters, might, by reading the précis, be put

in possession of all the leading features of what passed. The merits of such a précis are—

(1) To contain all that is important in the correspondence, and nothing that is unimportant;

(2) To present this in a consecutive and readable shape, expressed as distinctly as possible;

(3) To be as brief as is compatible with completeness and distinctness.

You are recommended to read the whole correspondence through carefully before beginning to write, as the goodness of the précis will depend very much on a correct appreciation of the relative importance of the different parts.'

(i) Besides drawing up a précis of a lengthy correspondence, it is convenient, for purposes of ready reference to the different letters, to make an **index** or **schedule** of them. This should be in two columns—the first containing the number of the letter in the series, the correspondents' names, and the dates. The second column will contain, in the briefest possible way, the substance of the communication.

(ii) In very long letters the main points will generally be found in the last paragraph, or last but one of the letter.

(iii) When an enclosure is made in a letter, if it be important enough, it must be digested as if it were a separate letter.

EXAMPLES.

1. Ordinary Narrative.

On the whole it seems to me certain that unless the area of Great Britain could be made larger than it is, or until the British people change their nature, a peasant proprietary is a dream. So long as a free, energetic race of men are crowded together in a small space, with every variety of employment open to them at home, with wide avenues to

distinction offering themselves abroad, and with every individual striving to push his way to a higher station than that in which he was born, so long the ownership of land will be the luxury of the comparatively few. A time I suppose will arrive when the giddy whirl of industry and progress will cease among us, when we shall no longer struggle for a first place among the nations. Then the tide will ebb; then the great estates will dissolve, and the soil will again be divided among unambitious agricultural freeholders. The land will then suffice for the support of all who live upon it. The grass will grow in the streets of Manchester. The Clyde will eddy round the rotting wrecks of the Glasgow merchant ships, and the plough will pass over the gardens of its merchant princes. The reign of Saturn will come back, and the golden age of pastoral simplicity. Till that time come, you must lay your account for a landed gentry of some kind, and, accepting the inevitable fact, you must try to make the best of it.—FROUDE, On the Uses of a Landed Gentry.

PRÉCIS.

The limited area of Great Britain and the character of its people make a peasant proprietary, for the present, a dream.—With the numberless opportunities for advancement offered by industrial life and emigration, the land will remain the property of the few, and will continue so till we lose our place among the nations.—Then, when commerce and industry are dead, every rood of land may support its man.—Meanwhile, a landed gentry is an inevitable fact, and must be accepted as such.

2. Official Correspondence.

The following is part of the official dispatches of the Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener, to the British Government, after the battle of Omdurman, under date 25th September 1898:—

I found at Fashoda, whence I have just returned, M. Marchand, with eight officers and one hundred and twenty men.

The French flag had been hoisted over the old Government buildings, in which they were located.

I sent a letter announcing my approach on the day before my arrival at Fashoda. On the following morning, 19th September, a reply was brought to me from M. Marchand by a small rowing boat carrying the French flag. It stated that he had arrived at Fashoda on 10th July, having been instructed by his Government to occupy the Bahr-el-Ghazal up to the confluence of the Bahr-el-Jebel, and also the Shilluk country on the left bank of the White Nile as far as Fashoda. It went on to say that he had concluded a treaty with the Shilluk chiefs, by which they placed the country under the protection of France, and that he had sent this treaty to his Government for ratification by way of Abyssinia, as well as by the Bahr-el-Ghazal. He described his fight with the Dervishes on the 25th August, and stated that, in anticipation of a second and more serious attack, he had sent his steamer south for reinforcements, but that our arrival had prevented a further attack.

When we arrived at Fashoda, M. Marchand and M. Germain came on board our steamer, and I at once informed them that the presence of a French party at Fashoda, and in the Nile Valley, must be considered as a direct infringement of the rights of Egypt and of the British Government, and I protested in the strongest terms against the occupation of Fashoda by M. Marchand and his party, and the hoisting of the French flag in the dominions of his Highness the Khedive.

M. Marchand stated, in reply, that he had received precise orders for the occupation of the country, and the hoisting of the French flag over the Government buildings at Fashoda, and added that without the orders of his Government, which, however, he expected would not be delayed, it was impossible for him to retire from the place.

I then inquired of him whether, in view of the fact that I was accompanied by a superior force, he was prepared to resist the hoisting of the Egyptian flag at Fashoda. He hesitated, and replied that he could not resist.

The Egyptian flag was then hoisted about fifty yards south of the French flag, on a ruined bastion of the old Egyptian fortifications, commanding the only road which leads into the interior from the French position. The latter is entirely surrounded to the north by impassable marshes.

Before leaving for the south I handed to M. Marchand a formal written protest on the part of the Governments of Great Britain and Egypt against any occupation of any part of the Nile Valley by France, as being an infringement of the rights of those Governments. I added that I could not recognise the occupation by France of any part of the Nile Valley.

As we passed Fashoda on the return journey north, I sent M. Marchand a letter stating that all transport of war material on the Nile was absolutely prohibited, as the country was under military law.

The chief of the Shilluk tribe, accompanied by a large number of followers, has come into Major Jackson's camp. He entirely denies having made any treaty with the French, and the entire tribe express the greatest delight at returning to allegiance to us.

M. Marchand is in want of ammunition and supplies, and any that may be sent to him must take months to arrive at their destination. He is cut off from the interior, and is quite inadequately provided with water transport. Moreover, he has no following in the country, and nothing could have saved his expedition from being annihilated by the Dervishes if we had been a fortnight later in crushing the Khalifa.

PRÉCIS.

The Sirdar sent a message in advance to Major Marchand announcing his arrival, and stating that he intended

to hoist the Egyptian flag over Fashoda.—A reply from Major Marchand stated that, in accordance with instructions from his Government, he had placed that part of the Nile Valley under the protection of France.—The Sirdar protested against such occupation, and inquired whether resistance would be offered to the hoisting of the Egyptian flag in Fashoda.—To this Major Marchand, after some hesitation, replied that the presence of the Sirdar's superior force made resistance out of the question.—The Egyptian flag was accordingly hoisted, and a formal written protest against the French occupation was handed to Major Marchand.—The Sirdar explains that Marchand's position was, and is, critical, and that his occupation is not effective. —Further, that nothing could have prevented his annihilation by the Dervishes, had the battle of Omdurman been fought a fortnight later.

The following is a specimen of an **Index** or **Schedule**, relating to part of the correspondence that passed between the British and French Governments on the subject of the French occupation of Fashoda.

N.B.—This correspondence may be found in a Blue Book on the subject of the Upper Nile, published on October 10, 1898.

Correspondents and Date of Letters.	Substance of Communication.
1. Sir E. Monson to M. Hanotaux, December 10th, 1897.	Reminding the French Government that Great Britain has an exclusive right to the occupation of the Nile Valley.
2. M. Hanotaux to Sir E. Monson, December 24th, 1897.	Protesting that this question is by no means settled yet.
3. The Marquess of Salisbury to Lord Cromer, Cairo, Aug. 2nd, 1898.	Authorising Lord Cromer to direct Sir Herbert Kitchener to proceed to Fashoda.

Correspondents and Date of Letters.	Substance of Communication.
4. Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Salisbury, September 7th, 1898.	Stating that the French Foreign Minister had enjoined Major Marchand to consider himself only as an 'emissary of civilisation.'
5. Lord Salisbury to Sir E. Monson, September 9th, 1898.	Advising him to inform the French Minister that the 'Fashoda Question' is not open to discussion.
6. Sir E. Monson to Lord Salisbury, September —, 1898.	Giving the French Minister's reply to the communication of September 9th,—a reply which was indefinite.
7. Sir E. Monson to the British Foreign Office (by telegraph), September 18th, 1898.	Sir E. Monson warned the French Foreign Minister that the French occupation of Fashoda was an unfriendly act, and that the whole situation was a dangerous one.
8. Sir E. Monson to the British Foreign Office (supplementary), September 22nd, 1898.	Relating how, in conversation with the French Minister, he warned him that the continued occupation of Fashoda might be a *casus belli*, and how the French Minister disclaimed the idea of any Marchand 'mission.'

3. Commercial Correspondence.

1. From Robinson & Smith, Bradford, to Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co., Bristol.

32 Spring Lane, Bradford,
9th August 1898.

Messrs. Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co., Bristol.

Dear Sirs,—We are obliged for your letter of yesterday, and take note of the order it contained for eighty (80) pieces of worsted tweeds at 3s.

In reply, we beg to state that the price of that article is advancing rapidly, and we do not well see our way to taking less than 3s. 3d. Should you be inclined to close on these terms, we beg the favour of a reply by wire to-morrow.—We are, dear Sirs, yours faithfully,

pro Robinson & Smith,
J. Lockwood.

2. From Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co., to Robinson & Smith.

29 Avongate, Bristol,
10th August 1898.

Messrs. Robinson & Smith, Bradford.

Gentlemen,—We are in receipt of your letter of yesterday, and thank you for the offer of the worsted tweeds at 3s. 3d. contained therein.

In reply, we beg to state that we have, after some difficulty, induced our customer to raise his limit to that figure. We now will therefore close on those terms. We are sorry that we have been unable to advise you of this by wire to-day, as we could not induce our customer to come to a final decision till after telegraph hours.—Yours truly,

Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co.

3. From Robinson & Smith to Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co.

32 Spring Lane, Bradford,
12th August 1898.

Dear Sirs,—We have your favour of August 10th, containing your customer's offer of 3s. 3d. With reference to

this price, we much regret that you were unable to wire on that day (August 10th), as by the time your letter was received your limit of 3s. 3d. became again impracticable. The prices for worsted tweeds were still advancing, and on August 11th, when your letter reached us, they stood at 3s. 6½d. We have now a firm offer at that price till 11.30 A.M. to-morrow.

As you will see, dispatch is urgent. Kindly, therefore, let us know by wire the first thing to-morrow morning if you will accept the price (3s. 6½d.) we now quote. We may mention that, to all appearance, the price will remain for some time firm at this figure.—Yours faithfully,

pro ROBINSON & SMITH,
J. L.

4. (By telegram). To Robinson & Smith, from Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co. 'Accept price of 3s. 6½d.'

PRÉCIS.

9/8/98. Robinson & Smith acknowledge letter of Messrs. Spilsbury, Rockall, & Co. with order for 80 pcs. worsted tweeds at 3s., but state that owing to advancing prices they must ask at least 3s. 3d.

10/8/98. They request an answer by wire. Messrs. S., R., & Co. reply that their customer will give 3s. 3d.,

12/8/98. but that it is too late to wire that day. Messrs. Robinson & Smith write that the limit of 3s. 3d. is now impracticable, and that worsted tweeds now stand at 3s. 6½d., at which price they have an offer. Messrs. S., R., & Co. can have till 11.30

13/8/98. A.M. on 13th Aug. to accept or reject. Messrs. S., R., & Co. wire that they will take goods at 3s. 6½d.

Emphasis and Inversion

CHAPTER XIV

EMPHASIS AND INVERSION

EMPHASIS in a sentence may be gained by the very smallest means, just as a slight movement of the hand by a pilot alters the direction of a vessel. The means are slight; the result is great. There are several ways of giving force and emphasis to our sentences—some of them legitimate, and some not so. In a simple, manly, and straightforward style of writing, it is manifestly wrong to employ tricks. At the same time, there are devices which a good writer may avail himself of without hurting his self-respect. We can gain emphasis, for example, by repeating **a the** or an **a**; by taking the very opposite course and leaving out the article altogether; by the use of a **superlative**; by a skilful use of **apposition**; and in several other ways.

1. **Emphatic use of 'the'.**—A good instance of this can be found in Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair': 'Becky became interested in everything appertaining to the estate, to the farm, the park, the gardens, and the stables.'

2. **Emphatic use of 'a'.**—Macaulay has: 'Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly imitation.' And Bulwer writes: 'This is a strange spectacle and a sacred.' But a sentence like this sounds somewhat affected.

3. **Emphasis gained by the Omission of the Article.**

—This emphasis is seen in the well-known phrases, 'hand in hand,' 'arm in arm,' 'foot to foot,' 'terrace above terrace,' 'leave town,' 'take ship,' 'give fingers,' 'at church,' 'at court,' etc. It is also found in such sentences as 'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great'; but this is most usual in verse.

4. **Emphasis gained by Apposition.**—This is a device most used in verse; but it is also found in good prose writers. Tennyson has:

> 'The daughter of a hundred earls,
> You are not one to be desired.'

And Carlyle makes his usual effective employment of it: 'He enjoys, he sinner, a glimpse of the glorious Martyr's very body.' What has been called 'the appositive or released adjective' (because it is not put close to its noun) has much the same emphatic power. Thus Macaulay: 'Ardent and intrepid on the field of battle, Monmouth was everywhere else effeminate and irresolute.' Take also this sentence from Addison, 'Greatly unfortunate, he fights the cause of liberty and Rome.'

5. **Emphasis by Repetition.**—This is a very easy way of giving emphasis to a statement. It corresponds with the hurry and eagerness of passion. A very good example is to be found in Shakespeare's 'Henry IV.': 'I have borne, and borne, and borne, and have been fobbed off, and fobbed off, and fobbed off, from this day to that day.' Dickens (in his 'Christmas Carol') employs it with much effect: 'Scrooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over and over.' The emphasis—if any—gained by repetition in Poe's poem of 'The Bells' is quite illegitimate: many of

the lines read like a mere list of words. Such phrases as, 'for many and many a day,' 'for years and years,' 'again and again,' 'on and on and on,' 'thus and thus,' 'for ever and ever,' are familiar to us all. And in poetry, of course, the effect of repetition is very strong:—

'Oh the dreary, dreary moorland!
Oh the barren, barren shore!'

TENNYSON.

The following are good specimens of repetition in prose:—

(i) 'Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the sense decays, the world changes, friends die. One alone is constant; One alone is true to us; One alone can be true; One alone can be all things to us; One alone can supply our needs; One alone can train us up to our full perfection; One alone can give a meaning to our complex and intricate nature; One alone can give us tune and harmony; One alone can form and possess us.—CARDINAL NEWMAN (quoted by Professor Earle).

(ii) 'Charles Kingsley was one of the manliest of men. He loved to visit the poor in his parish, and he loved cricket. He loved his Bible, and he loved rowing. He loved prayer, and he loved fishing. He loved the services of God's House, and he loved riding on horseback.'

6. **Emphasis by the Omission of 'and'.**—Emphasis, and rapidity, with liveliness as well, may be gained by the leaving out of the conjunction **and**. This device is used most frequently in poetry. A well-known instance occurs in Pope's lines:—

'What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?'

Bulwer's sentence is very effective: 'She gained the door, applied the key—the door yielded.' And this other: 'His life will be safe—his possessions safe—his rank safe.' And the following from Rogers's 'Italy' is very telling: 'If rich, they go to Italy to enjoy; if poor, to retrench; if sick, to recover; if studious, to learn; if learned, to relax from their studies.' But emphasis may also be gained by the repetition of **and**. This is most usually found in poetry. Thus Scott (in 'Rokeby'), see ca. ii. st. 14:—

> 'You mark him by the crashing bough,
> And by his corslet's sullen clank,
> And by the stones spurned from the bank,
> And by the hawk scared from her nest,
> And ravens croaking o'er their guest.'

7. **Emphasis gained by Antithesis.**—This is a very well-known device, but dangerous in practice, as it leads the writer to produce smart things, instead of adequately expressing, in a modest fashion, his whole meaning. Of course the antithesis or opposition need not be too violent. Thus Bulwer: 'What was my art? Genius, some say—some, Fortune—Witchcraft, some!' This, of Goldsmith, is, as usual, mild: 'The one vanquished by a single blow, the other by efforts successfully repeated.' Take this also, from Longfellow: 'This is not my fault, it is my destiny.'

8. **Emphasis gained by Inversion.**—This is a very common device. The best-known example is that from our translation of the New Testament: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' And the well-known 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I unto thee.' Carlyle has the sentence, 'Such a changed France have we.' This kind of inversion is most used when we wish

to throw some particular word or words into striking prominence. 'Seldom had such a sight been seen in London.' 'Scarcely had James I. mounted the English throne.' 'On swept the infantry—forward streamed the cavalry.' 'To a degenerate and contented people, liberty seems,' etc. Even Marryat employs this device: 'Venture to go down into the cabin I dare not.' 'Hate them perhaps we should not, but despise them we must, if enslaved.' It is plain that anything unusual in the order of our words calls attention, and therefore gives emphasis, to the word that is out of its usual place. Thus 'Wisdom infinite' is stronger than 'Infinite wisdom'; 'things impossible' is more striking than 'impossible things'; 'obstacles more serious' than 'more serious obstacles'; 'quays crowded with people' than 'crowded quays.' The same is true of longer sentences. If we write, 'That he deserved a better fate was not questioned by any reasonable man,' we produce a stronger sentence and throw the most important statement into greater prominence than if we put our words in the 'natural' order—'It was not questioned . . . that he,' etc. 'Small though the garrison was, they resolved to hold the fortress and to fight it out against an army ten times their number.' It must not be forgotten that, in discussing these almost technical devices, the only justification for their employment is an emotion, or even a passion, that demands them. To use them on an occasion which does not call for them would be very inappropriate; and fitness in words and phrases is one of the essential conditions of good writing. To say of a party going on board a river-steamer, 'On the deck they rushed, into the cabin they stormed, tea and coffee they demanded,' would be affectation of the most absurd character. It would be like buckling on a sword and pistols to go to an afternoon tea-party.

9. **The use of the Superlative.**—The superlative degree is an easy, and somewhat cheap, mode of gaining emphasis. 'She is one of the pleasantest figures in our literature.' 'The Turks illuminate their vessels of war in a manner the most picturesque.' Sentences such as these are easily produced. But there are more cunning, and more telling, modes of introducing a superlative. The following is a good instance from Gibbon: 'He was a ready orator, an elegant poet, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and a most contemptible sovereign.' Carlyle also uses it with force: 'Insurrection, never so necessary, is a most sad necessity.' Such phrases as 'the fairest of the fair,' 'the meanest of the mean,' 'the thickest and hottest of the fight,' 'the wildest of our despair,' all have their own value, and can be employed on appropriate occasions.

10. **Inversion** is a device of style which gives liveliness and sometimes vigour to the sentence. Begun with a participial phrase, the sense of the sentence is not perceived till the close; and the mind, obliged to look forward to the main statement, is thrown into an attitude of expectation: and thus the whole statement seems to gain force from a kind of spring somewhat akin to that which the gymnast obtains from his spring-board before he leaps. Of course the young student will not think of this device at the time he is writing his paper; but, after he has written it, he should go over each sentence with the device in his mind, and ask himself whether he cannot give it greater force and vigour by introducing it at the beginning. It must also be remembered that greater emphasis is thus gained; for the two most emphatic positions in a sentence are the beginning and the end, and of these the beginning is

the more important. The student then may look to the device of **Inversion** for giving spring, vigour, and emphasis to his sentences.

Let us take a few examples. The following are sentences of a sufficiently good construction:—

(i) The rebellion against the tyranny of the crown began again.

(ii) Napoleon possessed all those qualities, and many more, in the highest degree.

(iii) The British troops, though they were few in number, fought with the utmost pertinacity.

(iv) It may seem impossible, but I am resolved to undertake the task.

11. Now let us see how a slight change may give vigour and lightness to each of these sentences. A change in the position of one or two words produces this effect.

(i) Again (or, Once more) began the rebellion against the tyranny of the crown.

(ii) All these qualities, and many more, Napoleon possessed in the highest degree.

(iii) Few in number, the British troops fought with the greatest pertinacity.

(iv) Impossible as it may seem, the task shall yet be undertaken by me.

Let us look at a few more sentences, in which the required inversion has already been made.

(i) On these hideous spectacles the young Queen Mary was in the habit of gazing daily.

(ii) In a few days the town would be at its last loaf.

(iii) The poor, old, and sick of the village he visited every day.

(iv) Under the government of such a king, the people soon grew tired of the principle of monarchy.

12. It is plain that the above sentences have an animation and an energy which they would not possess if

the clauses were in their usual or 'natural' order. Mr. Motley, in his great work on 'The Rise of the Dutch Republic,' is very fond of employing inversion; and he employs it frequently with signal success. The following is an excellent instance (he is speaking of the rout of the untrained Netherlanders by the veteran troops of Spain): 'A single stroke of the iron flail, and the chaff were scattered to the four winds; a single sweep of the disciplined scythes, and countless acres were in an instant mown.'

Many eloquent and emotional writers fall naturally into this device. Thus Dickens, in his 'Poor Traveller':—

'Sorely cut up in every battle, but always reinforced by the bravest of men—for the fame of following the old colours shot through and through, inspired all breasts—this regiment fought its way through the Peninsular War.'

And Thackeray employs it, with great effect, in his lecture on George III.:—

'Low he lies, to whom the proudest used to kneel once, and who was cast lower than the poorest; dead, whom millions prayed for in vain. Driven off his throne, buffeted by rude hands; with his children in revolt; the darling of his old age killed before him untimely, our Lear hangs over her breathless lips, and cries "Cordelia, stay a little."'

CAUTION.—Care must be taken that the use of this device does not become an affectation. Many years ago, the 'Young Composer' was in the habit of beginning an essay on PRIDE or AMBITION in this fashion: 'Of all the passions that devastate society and harrow up the feelings of mankind, Ambition is most undoubtedly the worst.' This kind of thing ought to be carefully avoided. In the same way, we ought not to begin a sentence with an imperative—with a phrase like 'suffice it to say' or 'turn we now to another part of this great subject.'

The Use of Detail

CHAPTER XV

THE USE OF DETAIL

THERE is nothing that gives picturesqueness and vividness to a description more completely than the skilful use of detail. Macaulay is a past master in this art. He has, for example, to describe life and manners in the Scottish Highlands during the reign of George the Second (1727-60). He does not content himself with stating in a bald and dull fashion, that each Highland chieftain was supreme in his own district, and had a court of his own. He goes into picturesque details; and each detail is, as it were, an additional blow of the hammer to drive into the mind the statement that a Highland chief was a sovereign prince, with his own army and his own subjects.

'Not one in twenty of the well-read gentlemen who assembled at Will's coffee-house knew that, within the four seas, and at the distance of less than five hundred miles from London, were many miniature courts, in each of which a petty prince, attended by guards, by armour-bearers, by musicians, by a hereditary orator, by a hereditary poet-laureate, kept a rude state, dispensed a rude justice, waged wars, and concluded treaties.'

(Observe the effect of the words 'rude state,' 'rude justice,' as contrasted with the armour-bearers, the orators, and the poet-laureates.)

Macaulay goes on to point out that the code of morality was quite different from that in the Lowlands; that robbery was a profession, and an honourable one; that all real work was done by the women; that what is called education did not exist in any form; and that the food and lodging of the inhabitants was of the rudest and coarsest kind. And he does this in the following picturesque way.

'The traveller in these regions would have learned that a stab in the back, or a shot from behind a fragment of rock, were approved methods of taking satisfaction for insults. . . . He would have found that robbery was held to be a calling, not merely innocent, but honourable. . . . He would have been struck by the spectacle of athletic men basking in the sun, angling for salmon, or taking aim at grouse, while their aged mothers, their sickly wives, their tender daughters, were reaping the scanty harvest of oats. . . . His lodging would sometimes have been in a hut in which every nook would have swarmed with vermin. . . . At supper, grain fit only for horses would have been set before him, accompanied by a cake of blood drawn from living cows. . . . His couch would have been the bare earth, dry or wet, as the weather might be; and from that couch he would have risen, half poisoned with stench, half blind with the reek of turf, and half mad with the itch.'

Again, let us see how skilfully Macaulay employs mere geographical names, and the contrasts which these raise in the mind. He contrasts the splendid weather and civilisation of Versailles with the rude poverty of Skye; but his details throw up each member of the contrast into wonderful and striking prominence.

'A gentleman of Skye or Lochaber, whose clothes were begrimed with the accumulated filth of years, and whose hovel smelt worse than an English hog-stye, would often

do the honours of that hovel with a lofty courtesy worthy of the splendid circle of Versailles. Though he had as little book-learning as the most stupid ploughboys of England, it would have been a great error to put him in the same intellectual rank with such ploughboys.'

Once more, Macaulay has to tell us that the people who lived on the borders had carried on both private and public war for many generations; and that reprisals and revenges were matters of everyday occurrence. He puts these facts thus:

'National enmities have always been fiercest among borderers; and the enmity between the Highland borderer and the Lowland borderer along the whole frontier was the growth of ages, and was kept fresh by constant injuries. One day many square miles of pasture were swept bare by armed plunderers from the hills. Another day a score of plaids dangled in a row on the gallows of Crieff or Stirling. Fairs were indeed held on the debatable land for the necessary interchange of commodities. But to those fairs both parties came prepared for battle; and the day often ended in bloodshed.'

Figures of Speech

CHAPTER XVI

FIGURES OF SPEECH

1. ALL language is full of images or similitudes drawn from the external visible world. In fact, we are constantly obliged to have recourse to sights and sounds that we have seen or heard to enable us to explain fully and clearly what is going on in our minds. We speak of the 'spur to exertion,' 'a sea of troubles,' 'a spark of intellect,' 'a white heat of rage,' 'a torrent of eloquence,' an 'air of sanctity,' 'the breeze of popular favour,' 'a halo of glory,' the 'ardour' or the 'warmth of affection.' Again, we speak of 'a clear head,' 'rooted prejudice,' 'a ship rigged with curses dark,' 'the thirsty ground,' and so on. Thus we constantly employ the facts and shows of the external world to give expression to the movements of that internal world which we call the **mind.** Such phrases are called 'tropical phrases.'

(i) **Tropical** comes from the Greek word **trŏpos,** a turning; and these phrases are so called because the words in them are **turned away** from their original or earliest use.

(ii) Of an energetic man it was once said, 'He is a steam-engine in harness,' just as Macaulay was called 'a book in breeches.'

2. **Similes.** A **similé** is the comparison of one person or thing with another—this comparison being limited to one point. When we say—'He stood like a rock,' 'his words fell soft as snow upon the ground,' 'his voice was

like thunder,' 'his eyes flashed like lightning,'—we compare the man to a rock, the speech to snow, the voice to thunder, and the flashing of the eyes to lightning; but in each case the likeness or similitude is limited to one point.

'We spend our years as a tale that is told.'

'Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight too her dusky hair.'

'For merely intellectual purposes a simile cannot be too familiar and homely.'—MINTO.

3. **Metaphors.** A **metaphor** is a **simile** with the words **like** or **as** left out. Language is full of metaphors; and it is impossible for us to speak or to write without employing them. Thus we speak of 'reasoning in a circle,' of 'storming a town,' of 'the colourless rays of pure truth,' of 'the light of Nature,' of 'the thirsty ground,' of a 'dying lamp,' 'the dying day,' 'an angry sea,' 'a word in season,' 'the sinews of war,' 'the news wounded him (like a dagger),' 'he broke the law,'—and so on, and so on. Again, we speak of 'the light of knowledge,' 'the gloom of low spirits,' 'the heat of argument,' of 'a shade of doubt,' of 'the cold shade of opposition,' of 'a flash of wit,' or of 'a flash of silence,'—when a man has been talking too long and too continuously.

(i) Metaphor is so deeply sunk in, so thoroughly intermingled with, language, that we do not thoroughly recognise it. Thus, to **detect** means originally to uncover; **ardour** means simply heat; **melancholy** means black bile; to **edify** is to build up.

(ii) Of course the thing with which the comparison is made must be better known than the thing compared.

4. **Allegory.** Allegory is another figure of speech, or

rather of description, founded on the resemblance of one set of ideas to another. An allegory is a fictitious story, which conveys some abstract truth in symbolic language. It differs from metaphor chiefly in extent: the latter is confined to a single phrase or sentence, whilst allegory is sustained throughout the whole story—indeed is the whole story.

(i) 'Metaphor asserts or supposes that one thing is another, as "Judah is a lion's whelp"; but allegory never affirms that one thing is another.'—R. H. HORNE.

(ii) The most famous allegories in the language are Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and Spenser's 'Faerie Queen.' All the parables of the New Testament are allegories. Oriental nations have always been fond of this figure, a beautiful instance of which is to be found in Psalm lxxx—the comparison of Israel to a vine.

5. **Metonymy** is a kind of metaphor. (The word means a **change of name.**) We use metonymy when we take something that has a usual or even an accidental connection with something else, and employ the name of the one to indicate the other.

Thus the **Sublime Porte** (the High Gate) is used to indicate the Turkish Government; the **bar and the bench** stands for barristers and judges; a **white tie** may be used as the name for a clergyman, **a red coat** for a soldier; a **shovel-hat** for a bishop; **paste and scissors** for a sub-editor; and the **bottle** for habits of drunkenness. Again, when we say, 'Milan was in a state of frightful excitement,' we mean the people of Milan; and this is a kind of metonymy. Of course many of these metonyms are stale and overworn; and, when they are so, they ought not to be used by a writer who respects himself.

6. **The Part for the whole.** In the same way, it is usual

often to employ what is the most striking symbol of an office (or of its holder) to mark the office itself. Thus we say the **Crown** for the King or the Queen; the **Great Seal** for the Lord Chancellor, in whose keeping it is; and we say **red-tape** for stiff official usage and routine. If a lady gets from her father or her husband a yearly allowance for dress, it is called **pin-money**; though it would be impossible for the lady to spend it all on pins.

This is called **Synecdŏché**. Thus we say 'the sail' for the ships; 'new hands' for new workmen; 'five hundred bayonets' for five hundred soldiers.

7. **The Proper Name for the Common.** A certain amount of vividness is sometimes given by the use of proper names, by employing the names of famous persons in place of the qualities for which they made themselves famous. Thus Shylock, in the 'Merchant of Venice,' shouts, 'A **Daniel** come to judgment!' meaning a wise and thoughtful young man; we speak of a **Solomon**, a **Crœsus**, or a **Rothschild**, when we mean a man of great wealth; we say, 'Tom, Dick, and Harry,' or 'the man in the street,' for anybody in general or nobody in particular. Again, we call to our aid historical names and facts. To take an irrevocable step is 'to cross the Rubicon.'

8. **The Concrete for the Abstract.** It may give liveliness to the sentence if we say a **blush** for modesty; **grey hairs** for age; a **stall** for the office of canon.

The phrase to 'set the Thames on fire' has been placed in this class. But the phrase itself is quite erroneous. It is not the river Thames, but the sieve (the old English name for which was temse) that is spoken of. The meaning is that he is so lazy that, when he is riddling corn, he will never set the temse on fire with his energy, rapidity, and perseverance.

9. The Abstract for the Concrete.—This is a plan for gaining vividness which is quite the reverse of the previous method; but it has the merit of being unusual —and therefore striking. 'All the beauty and fashion, the wit and intelligence of the town were there.' 'Want and pain were the permanent inmates of his house.' 'The poor man dwelt daily with madness and despair.' Akin to this usage is the custom of employing abstract terms for persons of high rank. Thus we say: **His Lordship**; **His Grace** (for a Duke); **His Excellency** (for an ambassador, or the Viceroy of Ireland or of India); **His Holiness** (for the Pope); **His Beatitude** (for a Patriarch of the Greek Church).

Shakespeare (in 'The Winter's Tale') has 'Up goes my grave impudence to the maid'; but this kind of writing would not be suitable to our modern style. To the same figure belongs that kind of expression which puts an operation or act for the object of the act. Thus we can say, 'He was the **adoration** of the people'; 'He was the **detestation** of the whole school.' In the same vein are the lines:

> 'The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
> The young men's vision, and the old man's dream.'

10. A name for a high degree of the name.—This is a very common usage. We say 'a man of rank' for a man of high rank; 'Dickens very soon made a name for himself' (with the meaning of 'a great name'); 'a man of taste' is a man of fine taste; 'a man of family' is a member of a distinguished family; and so on. 'Jones is a man of character' means that he is a person of noble and upright character.

11. 'The sound an echo to the sense.'—There is a considerable number of words—chiefly verbs—in which

the word tries to imitate the sound it describes. Thus the words **brawl, buzz, crack, crash, hum, shriek, gurgle, peewit, whippoorwill,** and many others, are imitations — more or less close — of the sounds they describe. Pope employs this 'figure of speech' with much effect in his 'Essay on Criticism.'

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense;
Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.'

(i) This 'figure' is called **onómătopoeia**—from the Greek *onŏma,* a name, and *poieo,* I make.

(ii) Children employ largely this method of word-making. Thus they say 'bow-wow' for a dog; 'puff-puff' for a train, and so on.

12. **Antithesis and Parallel.** Antithesis is simply contrast. Parallel is an extension of antithesis—a continuous comparison that brings out the points of likeness or of difference between two men or two things. Both are figures which are, and can be, most constantly and most effectively employed. Macaulay is particularly fond of antithesis: 'he is never so antithetical as when describing character.'

(i) 'Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time.' Here there is a triple **antithesis**—of silence and speech, deep and shallow, of Eternity and Time.

(ii) An example of **parallel** is to be found in the following

passage from Dr. Johnson's Life of Pope:—'The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.'

13. **Epigram.**—An epigram is a pointed or antithetical saying, which conveys a striking thought in a few words. Some of the most telling epigrams are those which, at first sight, seem to involve a contradiction of meaning—e.g. 'Well begun is half done.' Logically this is not so; but the meaning intended to be conveyed by the epigram is very clear, and all the clearer because it is put in a lively way.

'The qualities rare in a bee that we meet
In an epigram never should fail;
The body should always be little and sweet,
And a sting should be left in its tail.'

14. **Hyperbolé.**—Hyperbole means exaggeration; it is the name applied to an extravagant statement not intended to be taken literally. Generally the use of such a figure is to be avoided, as all exaggeration is to be avoided. Sometimes, however, it has its use in descriptions of the grand and the sublime.

(i) For instance, Emerson's lines—

'Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world'—

are, logically speaking, extravagant, but they emphasise the supreme importance of the American revolution. So in 2 Samuel i. 23—'They were swifter than eagles; they

were stronger than lions'—the effect of the hyperbolical imagery is very grand.

(ii) In a different manner, to say of a man that 'he was so gaunt that the case of a flageolet would have been a mansion for him,' is literally, of course, the sheerest exaggeration. But by the use of humorous hyperbole, a certain impression is conveyed that could not have been produced in any other way.

15. **Climax and Anti-climax.**—The word climax means 'a ladder,' and the figure is one by which a series of clauses or phrases is so arranged that 'each in turn surpasses the preceding one in intensity of expression or importance of meaning.' Anti-climax is the reverse process, the intensity or importance weakening, instead of increasing, towards the end. Anti-climax is practically identical with **bathos**, and is, intentionally or unintentionally, humorous in effect.

(i) Climax produces an ascending effect, anti-climax a descending. The one waxes, and the other wanes.

(ii) When we say, 'Since concord was lost, friendship was lost; fidelity was lost; liberty was lost—all was lost!' we ascend in the scale of intensity; and that is **climax**.

(iii) But to say that 'he lost his wife, his child, his household goods, and his dog at one fell swoop' is a ridiculous descent, and affords an example of **anti-climax** or **bathos**.

16. **Irony** is covert sarcasm. It is the use of agreeable or laudatory forms of expression, which are intended to, and do, convey the exact opposite of their literal meaning. The man who wrote to an author of a dull book, 'I shall lose no time in reading it,' was delightfully ironical. Irony is vastly effective in driving home an argument or elaborating a position, where mere violence of invective would fail of its object. Mark Antony's

funeral oration in 'Julius Cæsar' is a masterpiece of irony; the veiled attack it contains on the conspirators who compassed Cæsar's death is far more powerful than an open onslaught.

A most effective ironical attack on the scandalous treatment that the Red Indians have sustained at the hands of the United States authorities, is contained in the following passage:—'Have not the Indians been kindly and justly treated? Have not the temporal things—the vain baubles and filthy lucre of this world—which were too apt to engage their worldly and selfish thoughts, been benevolently taken from them? And have they not, instead thereof, been taught to set their affections on things above?'—The Indians of North America have been persistently and unjustly robbed of their lands by the United States Government on one pretext or another. This fact is delicately, though none the less strongly, conveyed by the veiled method of irony.

17. **Euphemism** is akin to irony. It is the wrapping up of a disagreeable or direct truth in indirect or agreeable language.

We can thus say, euphemistically, that a person, who does not tell the truth, is 'fond of romancing,' or of an untidy girl that 'she displays singularly little vanity about her personal appearance.'

18. **Litótes.**—Litotes is a figure by which a statement is made by denying its contrary. Thus 'a citizen of no mean city' means 'one of an illustrious city'; and a poem that the 'world will not willingly let die' is one that will live for ever.

Generally litotes is a much abused figure, and the use of such phrases as 'no inconsiderable portion' for 'a large part,' and 'a by no means easy situation' for 'a difficult position,' are to be avoided. They are weak, flabby expressions.

19. **Vision.** Strong feeling about a narrative of events represents or has a tendency to represent everything as going on at the present time. Hence what writers on style call VISION describes an event or a scene as if the writer were present, as if what passed were passing before his eyes. But Vision, if it is genuine, enables the writer to **realise** what he is writing about, and thus we bring in small details which make the scene live before the mental eye of the reader. Take the following from Matthew Arnold's poem of SOHRAB and RUSTUM :—

> '. . . and Ruksh, the horse,
> With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
> Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
> First to the one then to the other moved
> His head, as if inquiring what their grief
> Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
> The big warm tears rolled down and *caked the sand.*'

It is plain that the poet here realised his vision and all the circumstances of it—that he *saw* what he wrote about.

20. **Personification.**—This is a figure of speech which endues with life and personality things that are inanimate, or abstract qualities (virtues and vices), like hatred, love, etc. Thus we speak of Father Time, Father Thames, Father Tiber; of Liberty as a great goddess; of the 'sun rejoicing as a strong man to run a race'; of the 'voices' of the trees and the brooks; of 'the mountains and the hills breaking forth into singing.' This is a kind of writing that must be very sparingly used.

(i) There is a very cheap method of personifying: that is, by printing the idea or thing personified with a capital letter. Russell Lowell speaks of 'that alphabetic personifica-

tion which enlivens all such words as Hunger, Solitude, Freedom, by the easy magic of an initial capital.'

(ii) Children and savages personify without thinking. Dickens is much in the habit of personifying even articles of furniture.

(iii) Personification is a figure very frequently found in combination with another called **Apostrophé**, or address. Thus in the lines—

> 'Violet, sweet violet,
> Thine eyes are full of tears'—

the violet is both personified and apostrophised, or addressed, as if it were an animate being. The opportunity for the use of these combined figures will occur but seldom in the ordinary writing of prose. They belong rather to the poet or to the impassioned orator.

21. Interrogation.—This 'figure' simply calls upon you to throw a direct statement into the form of a question, for the purpose of giving liveliness to your style. It is common in English, and very common in French. Thus a lover, rejected by the lady, might say: 'Well, though I am rejected, I will not sink into despair and die, because a woman happens to be beautiful!' But Wither, a pleasant seventeenth century poet, puts it more brightly:—

> 'Shall I, wasting in despair,
> Die because a woman's fair?'

'Alexander the Great is dead; the snows of yesteryear are gone.' This can be put in a more striking way by using the interrogative form: 'Where now is Alexander the Great? Where are the snows of yesteryear?'

A very similar change of a simple declarative statement is effected by the figure known as **Exclamation**, e.g.—

'But oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!'

This kind of exclamatory statement springs from deep emotion, and is to be used accordingly.

22. **Repetition** is simply the repeating or iteration of a word for the sake of strengthening the emphasis. Milton in his 'Samson Agonistes' makes Samson bemoan his blindness in these lines:—

'Oh dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!
Irrecoverably dark, without all hope of day!'

Tennyson, in one of his lyrics, has

'Break, break, break!
On thy cold grey stones, O sea!'

Edgar Poe, in his well known poem of 'The Bells,' overdoes this device, and makes his poem dull.

23. **Mixed Metaphor.**—If a metaphor is used at all, every part of it must be consistent with every other part. Thus we must not say: 'Mr. Jones once shook hands with a crowned head'; 'Mary threw her whole soul into the making of jam'; 'In a moment the thunderbolt was on them, deluging the country with invaders'; 'The bill, obstructed night after night by a phalanx of oppositionists, at length floated through both houses, and steered into the safe harbour of royal approbation.' The following of Addison's is also very absurd:—

'I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler strain.'

Here his 'Muse' is first of all a horse, then a boat,

and then a musical instrument. 'Mr. B. said that the keynote of the new policy was wrapped in obscurity'—this too is a mixed metaphor.

24. **Some Faults in the Use of Figures.**—Many of the figures that have been dealt with in this chapter are very liable to abuse. Such are **hyperbole,** which often results in pompous nonsense; **antithesis,** which, if used to excess, becomes wearisome by reason of the laboured and over-nice contrasts it draws; **exclamation,** because it comes too near the gasping and the ecstatic; and **climax,** which means sometimes a tiresome load of words. Then, too, there are many worn-out figures which every self-respecting writer should avoid—hackneyed clichés that have been used to death. Such are, 'an alabaster brow,' 'ruby lips,' 'raven tresses,' 'the silver moon,' etc.—all these are the refuges of the poverty-stricken writing hack. In the use of **similes** and **metaphors,** avoid any that are **far-fetched** or **inappropriate.**

(i) Longfellow, for instance, thus describes the approach of night—

> 'The day is done, and the darkness
> Falls from the wing of night,
> As a feather is wafted downwards
> From an eagle in his flight.'

The figurative language in these lines is very strained and forced. The darkness, that slowly and steadily enwraps the earth at the close of day, is not in the least like the gyrating fall of a feather through the air.

(ii) An American writer has described a stream 'sparkling through a lovely valley like a gold chain over an embroidered vest.' This kind of comparison revolts us at once: it is both inappropriate and in execrable taste. But in humorous or

burlesque writing a far-fetched comparison is often highly effective, as in Wendell Holmes's lines—

'And silence, like a *poultice,* comes
To heal the blows of sound.'

(iii) Lastly, in your use of similes and metaphors do not employ an image that conveys no impression to your reader, or one which is founded on local and personal allusions, or which refers to obscure places and characters. Marryat, in his novel of 'Jacob Faithful,' makes one of his characters say that a certain thing is 'like Sall's shoe,' but why it was like Sall's shoe took some pages to explain. Avoid comparisons of the 'Sall's shoe' kind, or any others which will require a marginal note to make them intelligible to the reader.

(iv) Avoid, also, such trite phrases as 'the festive board'; 'the mahogany' (for the dinner-table); 'the fragrant weed' (for tobacco); and 'the briny' (for the open sea).

25. A Caution.—The young student, though he knows well and appreciates thoroughly the nature and uses of figures of speech, must not allow himself to think that he has thereby entered on the power of employing any or all of them as or when he pleases. In this case knowledge is not power; that is to say, knowledge of the theory is not the same as power in practice. The knowledge which enables us to name the figure used by a writer is only a kind of rhetorical parsing. But parsing (or naming the parts of speech and their functions) has nothing to do with writing (or composition). Every student must find his own images or figures of speech for himself; and, if he does this, he will also know best where and how to use them. He will find them in Nature,—in the scenery of rocks, woods, and rivers,—in the risings and settings of the sun,—in the goings of the stars,—in the play of young animals and children. He will find them also in art,—in noble pictures,—in church-windows,—in great architec-

ture,—and in music. The operations of the workshop will help him in his search, if he keeps an open eye and an understanding heart; he will be helped too by the locomotive as it speeds along the country-side, 'trailing clouds of glory' as it goes,—by the powerful steam-boat as it cleaves its way through the billows,—by the slow oxen dragging the wain, or the stout horse pulling along the plough. In fact, there is not a sight or a sound or a movement in Nature that may not be pressed into the service of expression, that may not be compelled to furnish language for the invisible and inaudible operations of the mind.

(i) Carlyle's writings are full of daring figures of speech.

(ii) None of the figures of speech described in the above paragraphs ought to be used frequently. The effect of a figure depends on the rarity with which it occurs—on its novelty, on its difference from ordinary style.

(iii) Furthermore, the young writer must not say to himself, 'Now, what figure shall I use here to produce the best effect?' Such a reflection is artistically vicious, and the acting on it will give to whatever he writes a studiedly artificial and self-conscious look. Let your use of figures be an instinctive one—that is to say—if the sense or general tenour of the passage you are composing seems naturally to demand a figurative expression, then use it, but do not drag in a figure by the ears for the purpose of producing a particular effect at a particular point. The general drift of what you are writing will itself suggest the figures that are to be employed.

Exercises on Figures of Speech

1. Work the following phrases into sensible sentences:—
The spring-time of life; the flower of youth; the wings of

time; the voice of duty; the thirst for wealth; the torch of science.

2. Make sentences in which the following phrases are introduced:—The gnawing of envy; the eloquence of gold; the ties of friendship; the thread of argument; the wounds of self-love; the reins of government.

3. Make six sentences in which the following phrases find a place:—A black day; a soul of steel; a heart of oak; loud colours; poisoned words; struck with terror.

4. Make sentences with the following phrases:—A dry remark; an icy reception; a flight of eloquence; to stomach an affront; to feed with hopes; to sweep the ocean.

5. Make six sentences, in each of which one of the following phrases is employed:—Soil a reputation; stifle a sigh; hatch a plot; kill time; the perfidious wave; a stale discourse.

6. Find suitable similes or metaphors for the following:—Truth, falsehood, wisdom, goodness, innocence, justice.

7. Find suitable comparisons for the following:—Labour, indolence, violence, friendship, hate, love.

8. Compare the following mental conditions with something in nature:—Poetry, music, reason, industry, commerce, science.

9. Find suitable similes for the following:—Death, life, peace, war, anarchy, tyranny.

10. Compare the following with other natural phenomena:—Mist, rain, storm; morning, evening, night.

11. Find suitable similes for the following:—Heat, cold, frost; dawn, twilight; spring, summer, autumn, winter.

12. Compare the following with other things in nature:—Iron, lead, gold, silver, salt, clay.

13. Employ the following in similes:—An arrow, a sword, a hammer, a needle, a lamp, a key.

14. Compare the following with other well-known things:—A door, a gate, a chair, a table, a curtain, a jar.

15. Compare the following with other things:—A pen, a pencil, a trumpet, a piano, a ring, a bicycle.

16. Find suitable comparisons for the following:—The fields, the forests; a garden, an orchard; an apple, a lily.

17. Compare the following animals with other existences in nature:—The monkey, the elephant, the tiger, the lion, the fox, the rat.

18. Compare also the following:—The eagle, the crow, the lark, the cuckoo, the nightingale, the robin.

Letter-Writing

CHAPTER XVII

LETTER-WRITING

THE same rules apply to letter-writing as to the general art of Composition. Letters should be written grammatically, clearly, and with some sense of arrangement and proportion of detail. But there are two styles of letter-writing, the mould of which differs very considerably: these are the styles of private letters and of business letters.

In private letter-writing let yourself go a little—be entirely natural. Remember that you are not writing in an examination-room. This of itself will probably cause you to write in a natural style. Nothing is so tiresome—nothing gives so little pleasure to receive, as a 'composition' letter. In private letters anything like a formal style is disagreeable; indeed, much more laxity of expression—even to colloquialism—is both admissible and pleasant. If you are writing to a friend, write to him as you would talk to him, and not as if the eye of the examiner were always upon you. Generally, write the address clearly, and do not forget the date. As to what you sign yourself, that depends of course on the relation in which you stand to your correspondent.

In business-correspondence the case stands differently. Be formal, be clear, and be brief. The best business letter is that which conveys its meaning in the fewest words—consistently, of course, with ordinary politeness.

Business men have no time for flowery language, nor leisure to disentangle their correspondent's meaning from a maze of words.

There are several minutiæ to be attended to in writing a business letter.

(i) 'Sir' is the most formal opening. Business men of equal position may use 'Dear Sir.'

(ii) The date is often put for shortness 20/8/99 or 20-8-99. The middle figure stands for the number of the month.

(iii) In addressing a firm or company, the proper style for opening a letter is 'Gentlemen.'

(iv) A clerk, in writing for his employer, may sign thus—

WARREN, FOOKES & CHAPMAN.
per pro W. H. S.

Or, *pro* WARREN, FOOKES & CHAPMAN.
W. H. S.

(v) Always be careful to make the address clear and explicit. You thus save the post-office trouble, and yourself delay in receiving an answer to your letter.

A few more directions may be added.

(i) Begin a fresh paragraph for each new topic.

(ii) Avoid underlining your words. Doing so is a sign of mental weakness, and would seem to imply that your correspondent is not otherwise able to make out your meaning, or to estimate the exact value of what you say.

(iii) Keep clear as far as possible of the letter 'I.' Do not be extreme in its avoidance, but use it sparingly, so as to avoid a too egotistic tone. (The passive voice of the verb is always at hand to help you in this.)

(iv) Finish the letter with an appropriate ending. Do not come to a sudden and abrupt stop, and then subscribe yourself 'Yours sincerely, etc.'; but let what you say come to a natural close.

(v) Avoid such phrases as 'hoping this will find you as it leaves me, in good health.' They are both clumsy and hackneyed.

(vi) Do not sign 'hoping to see you soon, believe me, etc.' This is ='I hoping,' 'believe you,' which is bad grammar, for 'hoping' does not agree with the subject of 'believe.' But you will be right as to grammar if you substitute 'I am,' etc. for 'believe me.'

4. A fruitful, and a very common, source of mistakes is the writing of letters in the third person. This form is generally used in sending and answering notes of invitation. THACKERAY in 'Vanity Fair' gives us an instance of how such a letter should not be written.

'Sir Pitt Crawley begs Miss Sharp and baggidge may be here on Tuesday, as I leaf for Queen's Crawley to-morrow morning erly.'

GREAT GAUNT STREET.

The error here is obvious. Sir Pitt Crawley begins in the third person and then drops into the first (his spelling need not be criticised).

There is a similar danger to be guarded against of getting out of the third into both the first and second persons—as in the following note:—

'Mr. Williams presents his compliments to Mr. Jones, and if he has got an umbrella which is not his, then it is probably mine, and the corresponding one is yours.'

Do not write in declining an invitation to dinner—

'Mr. Akehurst is very sorry to have to decline Mrs. Gray's kind invitation to dinner on the 31st, as he will be out of town at that date. He hopes, however, to have the opportunity of calling on *you* on his return.'

In all letters of this kind, if you begin in the third person, keep to it all through. Put the address and date at the bottom left-hand corner of your note thus:—

'Mr. Longman accepts with much pleasure Mrs. Garrett's kind invitation to dine on New Year's Day. As Mrs. Garrett has omitted to state the hour, Mr. Longman hopes he will be in time if he comes at seven o'clock.'

19 Wardour Street,
26th December 1899.

Exercises in Letter-Writing

Read over the following exercises, and then write letters in your own words, incorporating the facts or ideas they contain. The letter may be written to any person you please; but care should be taken that the signature and mode of address are suitable to the person to whom you are writing, or to the terms which you are on with him.

1. A gentleman was once invited to a ball and supper on the 31st of December. His reply was that he should be very happy to pass a portion of two years with his kind host.

Write the invitation and the acceptance for the above party.

2. Write (as from the country) to a grocer in the town, ordering certain articles. Be explicit in defining exactly what you want, and say the goods will be paid for on delivery by the grocer's cart.

3. Write explaining why you have failed to discharge a debt of correspondence long due. Reasons: illness, accumulation of correspondence, and press of business. Hope to see more of your friend in a short time. Apologise for your delay in answering.

4. Describe a visit to St. Paul's Cathedral. Majesty of the site; the great house of religion in the midst of a sea of business; the smoke-grimed dome. Feeling of awe on entering and looking up to the majestic roof; sense of peace and quiet. The tombs and memorials—how they strike you, and what memories they call up. Contrast, on leaving the church, with the busy whirl outside.

5. A friend has three puppies, and does not want them all. Write asking for one, saying you will take good care of it, and will be obliged for hints in rearing it. You look forward with much pleasure to the gift.

6. At an examination you fail in an Algebra paper by neglecting (contrary to your teacher's advice) to do the easy sums first. Write to him saying you are sorry for this. Explain how you got first interested and then puzzled over an intricate problem, and so lost time. Promise to attend to his advice next time.

7. Invite by letter a friend to come and stay with you in the country. He can do what he pleases and dress as he pleases. Describe various attractions: fishing, helping in the harvest, or doing nothing at all but lie in the orchard and take in great baths of sunshine. Hope he will come; you are sure it will do him good after his confinement on an office-stool.

8. Write to a clergyman reminding him of his offer to lend you some books. Had not the courage to ask till now, but will take the greatest care of any books lent. Ask his advice about a choice of books on the subject of open-air botany.

9. You are invited to a friend's house, where he tells you you will meet a person you do not like. Your friend does not know of your dislike. State frankly the reason why you are unable to accept the invitation, but put your answer in such a way as not to wound your friend's feelings. You are afraid your acceptance would cause unpleasantness for him.

10. You are applying for a post in a school. Write to your old schoolmaster for a testimonial. State the work you would have to undertake if chosen for the post: teaching, supervision of preparation, general duty. Mention the great debt you owe to your old teacher, and say you are sure a testimonial from him would go far in helping you to secure the position.

11. You have ordered goods from a tradesman, and sent a remittance. Goods have not arrived, though you have written twice about them. Write again for an explanation. Point out the inconvenience you have been put to, and request an answer by return.

12. Apply for a situation in a commercial house—say a hosier's establishment. State your qualifications, and put in any testimonials you may have. Make your application short, but polite; say everything necessary, but not a word beyond.

13. Answer a letter of a friend, who has written you a letter coutaining nothing but questions. Write him in a chaffing vein, pointing out that your day only contains twenty-four hours, and that if it was twice as long you could hardly answer all his queries. Offer to send him (on receipt of postage) your daily diary.

14. You have met with an accident while driving a friend's horse and gig. Two bicyclists on the wrong side of the road nearly ran into you. Horse shied and upset the cart, smashing one shaft. Write to your friend explaining the accident, regretting that it was unavoidable.

15. You hear from an old schoolfellow that he is engaged to be married. Write and congratulate him, and give him your best wishes for his future happiness. As you do not know the lady, but do know him, say that you ought rather to congratulate *her*, and hope that you will have the pleasure of doing that soon.

16. Write asking for particulars about a seaside lodging. Inquire about aspect of rooms, drainage, attendance, nearness of sea, and terms. Have heard the lodgings in question well recommended, and will probably take them, if questions are satisfactorily answered. You believe that a friend of yours (name) has been in them before.

17. Write to your brother, asking him to buy a microscope for you. He knows the state of your finances, so will be careful not to get a too expensive one. Send P.O. for £3, which is as far as you want to go. Ask him to keep it till you can come and fetch it yourself.

18. You have just taken to bicycling, and are writing of it to a friend. Surprised to find it not so hard to learn as you expected. Describe difficulties of mounting and dismounting—how often you are apt to dismount on your head, though convinced that that is not the proper method. But you mean to persevere, and look forward with immense pleasure to the excursions you will be able to make. Persuade your friend to follow your example, and give some of the advantages of cycling.

19. Write describing a great storm that has just swept your coast. Ships driving helplessly ashore, rescue of the crews by the life-boat; trees uprooted; embankments washed away. Sense of relief when all is over. Pitiful sight to see fine ships lying helpless on the beach. Hard to imagine that the sea, so quiet and smiling in the summer, should cause such sudden and cruel destruction.

20. An application has been made to you for a loan of money by a person about whose honesty you have suspicions. You do not like to offend him outright by hinting at those suspicions, but you would desire further particulars before acceding to his request.

Write the answer to his application.

21. Write to a friend your first impressions on joining a new school as a teacher. The principal reserved, cannot make much of him yet. Two of your colleagues full of kindly offers of help. Pupils seem intelligent and well-behaved. Prospect, on the whole, pleasant; hope that the future will justify your first favourable impression.

22. Write to a friend saying you have nothing to say—no news. Why write, then? Merely for the sake of recalling yourself to him and in the hope of getting a reply from him, who *has* news. This letter more for the sake of saying 'Good morning.' Cannot make bricks without straw, but hope to get some straw soon, when you will write properly.

23. Having failed in an examination, you write the examiner for the reason. You recognise you have no real right to ask, but for the sake of your future studies, you ask him to be so very kind as to point out the weak sides in your papers. You cannot expect to receive a reply, which must be a tax on the examiner's time and good-nature, but will be very much obliged if you do.

24. Accept an invitation to stay with a friend. Delighted to get it; you feel so much at home at his (or her) house. Will come next week, but will let him (or her) know by what train and what day. Till then, etc.

25. An account of a railway collision you were in. Night-time; awful sense of shock; feeling of utter helplessness. Scene on escaping from shattered carriage—the great engine lying on its side, bodies lying about, a woman shrieking pitifully. No one seemed at first to know what to do. Relief parties come up. Foul play suspected. Cannot write much, owing to nerves being for the present so shattered.

Cautions and Suggestions

CHAPTER XVIII

CAUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. **Write short sentences.**—Then, if you feel that two or three short sentences would not lose any clearness or force by being run into one, join them. For the best style is that which alternates long with short sentences, so that the ear is never wearied by the monotony of the rhythm, but is pleased and encouraged to go on by the variety of the build of the sentences, and by the changes in the pause required. Ben Jonson says: 'Periods are beautiful when they are not too long: for so they have their strength too, as in a pike or javelin.'

2. **Repeating.** — Do not be afraid of repeating the same word in the same sentence; clearness is certainly gained by this, and sometimes force. Macaulay has this sentence: 'Tacitus tells a fine story finely; but he cannot tell a plain story plainly.' Here the repetitions strengthen the meaning and make it clearer.

Pascal says: 'When a writer finds that he has repeated the same word, and tries to correct this, if he finds that no other word can express his meaning so exactly, he must leave the words as they are.'

3. **Specification.**—Always be as specific as you possibly can. If the event you are writing about can be **seen**, that is, with the mind's eye, try to see it, and to write about it as you see it. Macaulay says that History has

little to tell us about the working-classes; but he does not put it in this vague and too general form. He says: 'History is silent about those who held the plough, who tended the oxen, who toiled at the looms of Norwich, and squared the Portland stone for St. Paul's.' Here the words 'Norwich' and 'Portland' not only help to make the statement more specific and more clear; they give a certain amount of local colour. Sir Walter Raleigh was executed 'on a cold, hoar-frosty morning,' says Carlyle; and these epithets enable us to conceive the scene with greater clearness and force.

4. **Verbosity.**—In writing a paper, use as many words and phrases as you can; be even verbose to the extreme. But, after it is written, cut out of your paper all the words and phrases that do not add to its clearness, or to its force. The analogy is to a fruit-tree with numerous leaves. The skilful gardener prunes away many of the leaves, for two reasons: first, that the sap and vigour of the tree should not go to the making of mere wood and leaves; and, secondly, that the heat and light of the sun may get more easily in to nourish and ripen the fruit. In much the same way, the vigour of a writer may be wasted in piling words upon words and phrases upon phrases: his vigour ought to go to the fullest expression of his thought—and no more.

> 'Words are like leaves; and, where they most abound,
> Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.'

5. **Naturalness.**—Express yourself naturally. That is, look out for the very simplest words; and do not hunt for long-tailed words in 'osity' and 'ation.' In other words, do not allow yourself ever to express your meaning in a way that may appear to be affected.

(i) A member of a Parliamentary Committee had to ask a witness what the working-men in his part of the country usually drink; but he put it in this pompous and affected fashion: 'Will you have the goodness to state, for the information of the Committee, what is the ordinary beverage of the industrial population in your locality?' Do not say for 'The weather was fine' 'The atmospheric conditions were delightfully pleasant.'

(ii) Professor Freeman was in the habit of revising his essays again and again, and substituting Anglo-Saxon for Latin words wherever it was possible.

(iii) George Eliot says: 'The finest language is chiefly made up of unimposing words.'

6. **Read your Paper aloud.**—After a paper is written, it should be read aloud. It should be read aloud either to a friend (if he is willing to listen to it), or to oneself. This for the purpose of finding out whether the rhythm of each sentence is agreeable to the ear. If it is not, we can either change the words and phrases that appear to be stiff, unmusical, and without flow; or we can leave out some words; or we can add some words or phrases; or we can change the order. Such changes are most likely to be required near the close of a sentence. The ear is always ready to pay most attention to the words at the end; and on this ground the close of a sentence should never be destitute of harmony and rhythm.

(i) A German writer, describing the naval power of the Dutch in the seventeenth century, compared it with the power of England in the nineteenth; and he put it in this way. Holland was in the seventeenth century exactly 'was England jetzt ist.' Not to mention the intolerable collocation of consonants in this phrase (it is like walking on and scrunching gravel), the sentence has two long, harsh monosyllables at its close. Contrast this with the English

ending: 'What England is to-day'; and, still more, with the French ending: 'Ce que l'Angleterre est aujourdhui.'

(ii) It is a good plan to read aloud a few sentences in a book of history, and to try how to improve the close of each sentence. This will be excellent training for the ear.

7. **Stiffness.**—Avoid every kind of stiffness in a sentence. Stiffness sometimes arises from the desire to show too clearly and with too great emphasis the logical reasoning or connection in a sentence. It is always best to take for granted that our readers have an average amount of common sense. Take the following sentence, which is given in a book on composition: 'A short time afterwards my uncle died; and my aunt went to her country-house in Derbyshire.' The sentence is good enough as it stands; but the author of the book substitutes **so** for **and**, so as to show the connection between the two events. But the writer goes farther in the same direction, and still further alters the natural expression of the two events; and he brings out this version in the following manner: 'Because my uncle died shortly afterwards, my aunt went to her country-house in Derbyshire.' But this version makes the sentence intolerably stiff; and, not only so, it brings into unpleasant prominence the logical connection of the two events. The original **and** was quite sufficient. In the same book we find another specimen: 'At this moment a large, comfortable white house, that that had been heretofore hidden by green trees, came into view.' This sentence is good enough; but the writer is not contented with it, and alters it into the following shape: 'A large, comfortable white house had been heretofore hidden by green trees: it came into view at this moment.' Now this new version is not only extremely stiff, it puts the house too prominently forward—it makes the house

and its being hidden the subject of a separate and independent statement, whereas it was evidently only one of the minor events during a drive in the country. Take another sentence: 'In 1066 was fought the battle of Hastings.' Here the order of words is stiff; and there is also in the sentence an unpleasant self-consciousness. But, in the sentence, 'Silver and gold have I none,' though the order of the words is unusual, yet the inversion is felt to be natural, because it expresses the strength of the feeling of the speaker and throws the words 'silver and gold' into the most emphatic position.

8. **Connectives.**—As connectives are the joints of the sentence, it is important that they should not make themselves too prominent; just as, in a figure or a drawing, the bones of the face should not stand out too strongly. The reader must always be credited with some common-sense, and be supposed to be able to draw an easy inference. For this reason, it is best not to employ such clumsy, obtrusive and self-assertive conjunctions as **therefore, thereupon, wherefore, whereby, wherein,** etc.

A close reasoner and a good writer in general may be known by his pertinent use of connectives. Read that page of Johnson; you cannot alter one conjunction without spoiling the sense. It is in a linked strain throughout. In your modern books, for the most part, the sentences in a page have the same connection with each other that marbles have in a bag; they touch without adhering.—S. T. COLERIDGE.

9. **Provincialism and Slang.**—It is of importance to avoid these two kinds of bad writing. Such phrases as 'serving him out,' 'giving him a dressing,' 'it suited me down to the ground,' 'all over the shop' ought never to occur in a piece of serious writing. Nor ought we to use the phrase 'hard up' for 'ill off.'

10. **Exaggeration.**—Avoid exaggeration. This advice looks excellent; but it must be taken with some qualification. The analogy is to the depicting of mountains and mountain-ranges in a map. If these were not exaggerated, they would be hardly visible. In the best German wall-maps, the scale is exaggerated to thirty or forty times the true height of the mountains. Hence this rule ought to run thus: Avoid exaggeration unless it adds force and clearness to your statement; and this exaggeration must never be out of proportion to the weight of your other statements. Do not use the word 'unprecedented' unless you know that the event you are describing is quite without precedent; do not employ the word 'incalculable' unless you know that the loss or gain you are pointing at is beyond all estimate. Avoid, of course, the easy use of 'nice,' 'splendid,' 'glorious,' 'delicious,' etc.

(i) The word 'awfully' has been so much used of late that it has lost all its true strength. 'Thanks awfully' is childish, where it is not fatuous.

(ii) The word 'literally' has of late been very much abused. It has been so hard worked that it has come to mean the very opposite of what it once meant. One gentleman writes: 'The present Parliament is literally dying of the rot.' An actor 'took London literally by storm.' The Monument was 'literally bursting with bunting.' Hailstones last month 'fell literally in sheets.' The Church, says an eloquent orator, 'will literally be made to bleed to death.' 'The House of Commons,' says another, 'has been literally ploughing the sand.' From the above sentences it is plain that 'literally' does *not* mean 'literally.' It means 'metaphorically'!

(iii) 'Many persons habitually use language of exaggeration from mere ardour of temperament. Their feelings are

always in extremes. What interests them for the moment is the most wonderful thing in the whole course of their experience. . . . Exaggeration is the natural correction of apathy, which is just as far from the truth on the other side.'—PROFESSOR MINTO.

11. **Dislocation.**—Dislocation is a failing into which loose and careless writers are apt to fall. The following are striking examples of this error:—

1. I believe that, when he died, Cardinal Mezzofanti spoke at least fifty languages.

2. A piano for sale by a lady about to cross the Channel in an oak-case with carved legs.

3. The Governors resolved to erect a building large enough to accommodate five hundred students three storeys high.

4. They followed the advance of the party, step by step, through telescopes.

5. Paid to a woman whose husband was drowned by order of the vestry under London Bridge, £1, 1s.

6. People ceased to wonder by degrees.

7. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' is a poem about Satan divided into twelve parts.

8. Mr. Smith killed fifteen brace of grouse along with a friend on his moor the other day.

9. The clerk spent all the money which had been entrusted to him by his young mistress in a drunken fit.

10. Sometimes a man confesses to a crime for which another man has been hanged before leaving the world.

11. Yes: I heard of the sale of Ford's Theatre where Mr. Lincoln was assassinated for religious purposes.

12. The shepherd used to carry the little cripple to the top of his crag on his back, where he would sit all day.

12. **Tautology.**—Avoid tautology. 'Gradually by degrees he gained the upper hand.' Here 'gradually' and 'by degrees' mean the same thing; and we ought to leave out the word we can most easily spare. 'The same happy combination of circumstances is not likely to occur together.' Here the word 'combination' contains the idea of 'together'; and the latter word is both superfluous and tautological.

(i) Such expressions as, 'the universal opinion of all men,' 'to restore again,' 'return back again,' are tautological.

(ii) Sir Archibald Alison, who was a very verbose writer (Mr. Disraeli called him Mr. Wordy), falls frequently into the sin of tautology. He has such sentences as these: 'Though not so extensive in point of *superficial surface*, Switzerland embraces,' etc. 'It was founded mainly on the *entire* monopoly of the *whole* trade of the Colonies.'

(iii) But there is a kind of tautology which cannot be helped—which cannot be avoided. Thus Dr. Blair says, 'Imitation and repetition differ considerably in their nature from each other.' Some critics say that the phrase 'from each other' is a tautology, because its meaning is contained in the word 'differ.' But this view is imperfect. In the first place, the word 'differ,' if alone, would seem to be too heavily weighted; and, in the second place, the phrase 'from each other' is wanted for the rhythmic close of the sentence.

13. **The Present Participle.**—Avoid the use of the Present Participle as much as you can. 'Finding that he was too late for the train, he resolved to hire a cab.' This is a good enough sentence. 'The enemy seeing that they could not carry the works, a retreat was resolved on.' Here the use of the present participle has induced the writer to leave the nominative 'enemy'

without any verb. The sentence ought to end with 'resolved to retreat.' 'I have documents proving this' is weak; it would be better to say 'which prove this,' or 'to prove this.'

A slovenly thinker or writer will sometimes close a sentence in this way: 'thus accounting for the sudden decrease in our commerce.'

14. **The Past Participle.**—On the other hand, the use of the Past Participle may give vigour to the sentence. 'Struck with terror, the conspirators rushed through the gate.' 'Alarmed at the news, the Brahmins launched their boat at once.' These are quite good sentences. It is necessary to observe with what noun the past participle agrees. Thus, if we write 'alarmed at the news, the boat was launched,' the participle 'alarmed' is made to go with the noun 'boat,' and the assertion is made that the boat was alarmed—which is impossible.

15. **Over-emphasis.**—Avoid Over-emphasis, that is, do not use big words when smaller and shorter words will do, avoid the use of grandiose language, and try to put things in as brief a form as you can, without, at the same time, being curt, abrupt, or unrhythmical. It is a poor thing to speak of a dog's tail as his 'caudal appendage,' or to write of a goose as 'an anserine individual.' On the other hand, there are legitimate modes of gaining emphasis. Thus it is more emphatic to say, 'every conceivable plan' instead of 'all plans'; and 'every rational person' is stronger than 'all men,' because it seems to single out and individualise the persons spoken of. There are always temptations to use strong words like 'supreme,' 'unique,' 'stupendous,' 'unparalleled,' 'unrivalled,' 'incalculable,' etc.

16. **Pronouns.**—Be careful in the handling of pronouns, that is, think out clearly to what **it** or **they** refers. Cobbett says: 'Never put an **it** upon paper without thinking well what you are about. When I see many **it's** in a page, I always tremble for the writer.' Bolingbroke, a writer of Queen Anne's time, has this sentence: 'They were persons of very moderate intellects, even before they were impaired by their passions.' Here the 'they' and the 'their' get mixed up, and at first it is not easy to say whether 'they' refers to the persons or to the intellects, especially when the 'they' is followed by 'their,' which undoubtedly refers to the word 'persons.' 'A good man will always sympathise with human suffering, even though it be only in a dog.' Here **it** refers to the words 'human suffering'—which is impossible. The sentence should be thus recast: 'A good man will always sympathise with the sufferings of others—even though the sufferer be only a dog.' Sometimes the mistake in the reference is made by the reader. Thus a pompous person once read: 'Saddle me the ass; and they saddled *him!*'

17. **Compactness.**—Let your sentences be not only clear, but compact. A loose, shambling sentence, consisting of a large number of clauses, puts a strain on the attention. The rhythm of such a sentence is also very disagreeable; it resembles a long-drawn-out whine. Here is a sentence which is as loose and tawdry as a sentence can be. It is from the letter of a lady complaining of the extravagance of a School Board and the extreme slowness shown by her daughter in learning to knit socks.

'Imagine my surprise to see this heel, after two years patient waiting, evolving into a shape, the last of which I saw made by my own grandmother, who has gone to her rest some twenty years ago, when I foolishly imagined that

the old-fashioned heel had died also, leaving its place to a shape more modern, natural, and comfortable; but alas! the School Board has corrected my silly notion, and I suppose I must now wait in the hope of some day receiving a finished and useless article, perhaps about the year 1900, if the girl can be kept at school till then, although working people find it difficult to keep their girls at school for so many years in order that they may be taught to knit a pair of socks, which will require their mother to remodel them before they can be worn.'

This is the breathless, slipshod style of Mrs. Nickleby, which Dickens has immortalised. The sentence is not only incoherent and unrhythmic, it ought to have been cut up into five or six.

(i) Mr. Breen says that Hazlitt, in an essay on Coleridge, 'has contrived to spin out a single sentence to one hundred and ten lines. It contains the word "and" ninety-seven times, with only one semicolon, and is probably the longest sentence in any author, ancient or modern.'

(ii) There is no harm in a long sentence, provided there is an organic unity in it, and provided that it is easily read aloud. But it is generally better to write in short sentences.

(iii) The following is a good specimen of a loose-jointed sentence: 'I asked him to show me his pictures, which he did, and pointed out one in particular, a portrait of a young man, painted, he said, by Wilson.'

18. **One Subject.**—Do not suddenly change the subject of the sentence. 'Archbishop Tillotson died in this year. He was exceedingly beloved both by King William and Queen Mary, who nominated Dr. Tenison, Bishop of Lincoln, to succeed him.' The sudden introduction of the new subject—'Dr. Tenison'—produces the same effect on the nerves as going suddenly down a step when we expected to find level ground. Such a sudden change

arises from a certain looseness in the mental joints, and from the want of a firm grip of the subject the writer is treating. Here is another example. 'The admiral died in his ninety-first year, when the Thames was covered with ice eleven inches thick, during a severe winter when nearly all the birds perished.' The lumping together of the admiral, the Thames, and the birds is inadmissible. The death of the admiral should form the subject of one sentence; the condition of the Thames of another.

(i) The following is a specimen of a different character: 'The accumulation of snow renders the clearing of roads a formidable undertaking, and in many cases is not attempted.' The latter statement ought to be put into its own sentence: 'Indeed, such clearing is in many cases not attempted.'

19. **The Use of And.**—The repetition of the conjunction **and** adds to the weight of a sentence; the omission of it contributes to its lightness and rapidity. 'Beef,' says Swift, 'is the king of meat; beef comprehends in it the quintessence of partridge and quail and venison and plum-pudding and custard.' Here the repetition of **and** gives the effect of piling up the qualities of beef, and thus of making the statement more weighty.—Here is a sentence from Sir Richard Steele; and it will be seen that the omission of the conjunction gives lightness to the sentence. 'Sylvester talked of the strength, the dignity, the forcible observation, the wit of Swift; Alexander of the ease, the gracefulness, the native and agreeable humour of Addison.' In the same way, rapidity in a historic narrative is given by the omission of **and**. Thus Hume says: 'He rushed amidst them with his sword drawn, threw them into confusion, pushed his advantage, and obtained a complete victory.'

20. **Antecedents.**—Make sure of your antecedents.

The following sentence comes from Hallam:—'With great defects of style, which should be the source of perpetual delight, no long poem will be read.' In this sentence the grammatical antecedent is **defects**; the real antecedent is **style**. The sentence ought to be thus reconstructed: 'With great defects of style—and style should be the source of perpetual delight—no long poem will be read.' The caution might be given in this way: The grammatical antecedent ought to coincide with the real antecedent.

21. **Clichés.**—Avoid stereotyped and hackneyed phrases. Do not refer to Homer as 'The blind old bard of Scio's rocky isle'; to Dante as 'The great Florentine'; to Shakespeare as 'The Swan of Avon'; to Charles II. as 'The Merry Monarch'; to fire as 'the devouring element'; to a policeman as 'an intelligent member of the force.' Do not speak of tea as 'the cup that cheers but not inebriates'; of a schoolmaster as a man 'who teaches the young idea how to shoot'; of a minor politician as 'some village Hampden'; or of admitting as 'owning the soft impeachment.'

(i) Still less is it advisable to use hackneyed French phrases. The young student must sedulously avoid such phrases as: Le premier pas; sur le tapis (which never was French); the tout ensemble; my confrères; un fait accompli; he received his congé; and so on.

(ii) Under this head might come the recommendation to avoid in writing all kinds of slang. Slang is the stereotyped language of a somewhat common mind in its commonest state. It forms a cheap substitute for thinking; but its staleness and commonness ought to be avoided. Such words as bosh, rot, tommyrot, peckish, dodge, exam. (for examination), incog. (for incognito), are beneath the dignity of

sensible writing. Again we should carefully shun such phrases as 'Down to the ground'; 'All over the shop'; 'Awfully jolly'; 'He didn't seem to see it'; 'Not half bad'; 'Do the handsome'; 'Beat the record'; and so on.

22. **New Words** (i).—We have seen that we have lost, in the course of ages and the passing away of generations, a number of good and expressive English words, which it would be a gain to the language to restore. But it is not for the young writer to do this. He can no more reintroduce an old word than he can create a new one. He cannot bring back 'comeling' for 'immigrant,' 'rime-craft' for 'arithmetic,' or 'wanhope' for despair. Only a great and popular poet could succeed in such an attempt.

But there are certain words which seem to dwell on the borderland between older English and quite new English; and these the young student may make use of, if he is sure that they will add force or vividness to his style.

Such words as *highmindedness*, *contentedness*, *composedness*, *inwardness*, *naturalness*, and even *somethingness* are admissible into good English prose.

(i) 'Nor Nature fails my walks to bless
With all her golden inwardness.'—LOWELL.[1]

(ii) 'What an unusual air of *somethingness* in his whole appearance!'—GOLDSMITH.

23. **New Words** (ii).—Again, Carlyle gives us such compounds as *beadledom*, *rascaldom*. We have long had the words *manhood*, *hardihood*, and other such like; but Mr. Parnell gave us some years ago the word *nationhood*, which may still be used. Words like *benison*, *malison*, *orison* may still be employed by English writers, but they are to be found chiefly in poetry. We cannot say 'wine of noble sentiment' (flavour) as John Mandeville did in

[1] Quoted by Professor Earle in his 'Philology of the English Tongue,' p. 302.

the fourteenth century, the word being now detailed for the expression of a kind of mental feeling. French words like *prestige*, *espionage*, *refugee*, *payee*, etc., have lived so long in our language, that they may be considered as permanent settlers. *Dastard*, *dotard*, *wizard*, and *placard* are also immigrants whose right to a settlement no one now thinks of questioning. *Finesse*, *largesse*, and *prowess* are quite admissible in prose. *Parade* and *tirade* (invective) are now quite as much at home as *cavalcade* and *esplanade*. The Italian words *fresco*, *studio*, *virtuoso*, etc., may be employed as English words in English prose, when we are speaking of the things they designate.

24. **Long Words.**—We should avoid 'long-tailed words in *osity* and *ation*,' whether they are new or old. We can say *impetuosity*, but not *speciosity*; *pomposity*, but not *populosity*. We can use *magnate* and *syndicate*, but not *tribunate*. We can say *materialism*, but not *modernism*; *novelist* and *dogmatist*, but not *publicist*.

(i) There are many shortened forms of words which we can easily be in doubt about, when we are considering whether they are admissible or not into English prose. *Cab*, *stress* (short for *distress*), *sport* (for *disport*), *story* (for *history*), *spend* (for *dispend*), *mole* (for *moldiwarp* = mould-thrower), all seem at home in the language; and they may be used in the kind of prose that seems to require them.

(ii) *Changeling*, *strangeling*, *youngling* are just as good words as *duckling* or *gosling*.

25. **Out-of-the-way Adjectives.**—We can say *golden* and *leaden*, even in prose; but we must leave to poetry such words as *elmen*, *cedarn*, *olden*, *trëen* (Spenser has 'trëen mould'). *Boorish* and *outlandish* are admissible; but *elvish* and *soulish* have a poetical flavour about them. The same may be said about *bloomy* (Milton has 'bloomy

spray,' and Shelley 'bloomy forests'), *lawny*, etc.; though adjectives like *heady*, *hearty*, and *weedy* have free admission into our prose. We can use *godly* and *unmannerly* in prose; but only a poet can employ the word *steelly* (William Morris has 'Midmost the beating of the steelly sea'). *Quarrelsome* and *battlesome* are good prose epithets; but *darksome* (Keats, in the 'Ode to the Nightingale,' has 'Darksome I listen'), and *gladsome* can be used only in poetry. *Formal*, *intellectual*, *habitual* are in everyday use; but *seasonal* is rather too new a word. *Courteous*, *dexterous*, *erroneous* are all words in ordinary use in ordinary prose; but *joyous*, *operose*, *otiose*, and *bellicose* would with difficulty find a place. We can all employ in prose, when we want them, such words as *appreciative*, *distinctive*, *responsive*; but such words as *crescive* (=growing), *forgetive* (used by Shakespeare), and *reparative* are somewhat out of the running. *Elegant* is still used in the United States as equivalent to 'very nice,' and people there talk of 'an elegant leg of mutton'; but on this side of the Atlantic its use is much more restricted. Nor must we be led astray by imitation of Carlyle's usages into employing such superlatives as *wonderfullest*, *remarkablest*, *imperturbablest*, and others.

26. **New and Old Adverbs.**—Such a word as *darkling* could be admitted only into verse: Milton speaks of the nightingale as 'the wakeful bird' that 'sings darkling.' We can say *piecemeal* in prose; but *limb-meal* (used by Shakespeare) could not be used. *Verily* is now archaic; and *awfully* belongs to the vocabulary of slang. Sometimes a fine effect is obtained in prose by the use of powerful adverbs, as in the following sentence: 'They see something divine and God-made in every other

man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.'[1]

27. **Adverbial Phrases used in Poetry.**—Such words and phrases as 'of old,' 'of yore,' 'agog' (used in 'John Gilpin'), 'aright,' 'something' (as an adverb—so used by Shakespeare), 'save' (as a preposition), 'nathless,' 'scarce' (for 'scarcely'), 'whilom' (for 'formerly'), and 'anon' (for 'at once'), are not admissible into prose; they belong to the diction of poetry. Again, poets are allowed, by what is called 'poetic licence,' to write bad grammar, and to use an adjective as an adverb. Thus Pope:—

> 'True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
> As those move easiest who have learned to dance.'

A prose writer would have been obliged to say 'most easily.'

28. **And which.**—Do not use the phrase **and which** unless another subordinate clause introduced by **which** has gone before. 'This is the dog which I selected, and which I intend to buy.' This sentence is right; but the following is wrong: 'That is the book I prefer, and which I ordered from the bookseller's.' It is wrong, because there is no **which** before the clause 'I prefer.'

29. **Compounds.**—Avoid the use of unusual compounds. The words Coast-line, Hand-book, War-horse, and many other such are all naturalised and at home in this country, though the custom of joining nouns in this way came from Germany. But we must avoid such compounds as: Book-adept, World-system, Unwisdom, Age-distant, Knowledge-qualification; or such semi-poetic epithets as: fancy-free, home-enfolding, high-toned, etc.

[1] Quoted by Professor Earle in his 'Philology of the English Tongue,' p. 412.

30. **Simplicity.**—Cultivate simplicity as well as brevity in your style. Thus:—

Avoid	Write
Previous to his being appointed.	Before he was appointed.
In the perusal of novels.	In reading novels.
The first that entered.	The first to enter.
He imparted knowledge.	He taught.
The first who crossed the zone of fire.	The first to cross.
At the expiration of four years.	At the end of four years.
He requested that I should.	He asked me to.
Repress his sentiments.	Keep down his feelings.
Paternal sentiments.	The feelings of a father.
An exalted station.	High rank (or, rank).
Exceedingly opulent.	Very rich.
Convalescent.	Getting well.
A concatenation of circumstances.	A number.
A meritorious deed.	A good action.
The juvenile pupil.	The young learner.
Violate one's promise.	Break one's word.
Complete indigence.	Utter want.
An acquaintance with maritime affairs.	A knowledge of the sea.
Extreme felicity.	Great happiness.
In the affirmative; negative.	Yes; No.
Assist you to a slice.	Help you to.

31. **The Split Infinitive.**—Avoid the split infinitive. The 'split infinitive' is a name (it is to be hoped that both name and thing will soon be forgotten) which has been given to a separation introduced between the 'to' and its verb by the insertion of an

adverb between them. Thus, a well-known newspaper said the other day: 'Lord Rosebery rose to gratefully accept the gift.' The effect is one of stiffness, of self-consciousness—of a thinking about how and where to put one's words, instead of thinking simply of the matter we have to speak about. The writer might have avoided this stiffness and clumsiness by saying quite simply and easily: 'Lord Rosebery rose to express his grateful acceptance of the gift.' Again, we continually find in books and newspapers such sentences as these: 'The engineer gave his whole mind to carefully adjust the parts of the machine.'—'The officer resolved to obstinately defend the dangerous position.' In the first sentence, it is easy to turn the verb into a noun, and to say 'to the careful adjustment of'; and, in the second sentence, to turn the adverb into an adverbial phrase, and to say 'to defend with the utmost obstinacy,' or 'to defend to the last cartridge,' or some phrase of that kind. The 'split infinitive' is a weed which grows rankly in the garden of the journalist. Every young writer should avoid it as he would the plague or shares in a bubble company. The English Language is so rich—so full of varieties of phrase, so wealthy in different shades and nuances of expression, that the 'split infinitive' can be avoided with the greatest ease, and should never appear in the sentences of a young writer. It is always easy to form habits; it is the most difficult thing in the world to get rid of them. It is easy to form the habit of using the 'split infinitive'; it is just as easy to form the habit of not using it. The reward for forming the habit of not using it is that we increase the pliability and suppleness of our rhythms, and add enormously to our stock of phrases and variations.

(i) An able critic says: 'Of all the undoubted masters of

English, none was so careless of minor niceties as Thackeray. But he did not split his infinitives.'

(ii) The following 'split infinitives' can easily be translated into phrases that are much smoother and pleasanter to the ear:—

To slowly learn.	Slowly to learn.
To clearly write.	To write with the greatest clearness.
To calmly state.	Calmly to state, or To state with calmness.
To accurately give the facts of the case.	Accurately to give . . . or To give accurately.
To uninterruptedly go on with his task.	To go on uninterruptedly . . . or To continue his task without interruption.
To stingily dole out the means of living.	Stingily to dole out . . . or To dole out with a grudging hand. . . .
To any longer play.	To play any longer.
Reluctance to formally censure the Ministry.	To pass a formal censure on. . . .
To largely supplement private beneficence.	To supplement on a large scale the beneficence of. . . .
To in any way interfere.	To interfere in any way.
To immediately be issued.	To be issued immediately
To readily grant the request.	Readily to grant . . . or To grant with ease.
To hastily despatch a telegram.	To despatch a telegram in haste.
To stammeringly repeat his request.	Stammeringly to repeat.
To mutually accept or refuse.	Mutually to accept or refuse.

(iii) Mr. Andrew Lang ridicules the split infinitive in the following sentence: 'He who aims at failure can hardly be too reckless of grammar, and should always place adverbs

and other words between "to" and the infinitive, thus: "Hubert was determined to energetically and on all possible occasions oppose any attempt to entangle him with such . . ."'

32. **Beginnings.**—Vary the beginning of each sentence as much as possible. Many writers, in describing the character of a man, will begin every sentence with He. Thus Bishop Burnet, writing of William the Third, has long series of sentences beginning in the same dull way: 'He had a thin, swart body,' etc.; 'He had a Roman eagle nose,' etc.; 'He was always asthmatical,' etc.; 'He spoke little, except,' etc.; 'He had no great advantage from his education,' and so on. But it is plain that the opening of each of these sentences might have been varied. They might have run thus: 'His frame was weak and thin'; 'The most prominent feature of his face was a Roman eagle nose'; 'Asthma was chronic with him, and' etc.; 'Not given to much speaking, he,' etc.; 'His education had done but little for him.' A young writer, speaking of hermits, says: 'At one time many men thought it right to live quite alone, and to shut themselves out from the pleasures and luxuries of the world. They thought this a very self-denying life.' The second sentence begins quite wrongly. For it is manifest that the subject of which the writer is speaking is not 'Many men,' or what these undefined persons thought; it is the hermit's life that is the subject of discussion. The second sentence ought therefore to have run thus: 'This kind of life they thought a self-denying life.' When the young writer is revising his paper and putting upon it the finishing touches, he should ask himself three questions about every sentence: (i) What is the most important word in this sentence? (ii) Can I, without producing the effect of stiffness, place it at the beginning? (iii) If not, can I throw it to the end? The rhythm of the sentence must, of course, be in all cases preserved.

33. **Only.**—Adverbs should be placed as near as possible to the words they modify. The adverb that most frequently escapes from control is the slippery word 'only.' Thus we can have three positions, in each of which 'only' modifies a different word or phrase. (i) Our hero only fought for fame; (ii) Only our hero fought for fame; (iii) Our hero fought for fame only. The meaning of the first and the last sentence is the same, but the position of 'only' at the end of the last sentence gives it greater strength.

(i) Sometimes 'only' is an adjective. Thus we say: 'Only Mr. Balfour approved.' This should be altered into 'Mr. Balfour alone approved.'

(ii) In the sentence, 'Only five appeared,' 'only' is an adverb modifying five.

34. **The Relative.**—Be careful in the use of **that** and **who**, of **that** and **which**. A subordinate sentence introduced by **that** is purely limitative and descriptive; it adds nothing to the meaning. 'C 42 is the policeman that guards the warehouse.'[1] **Who** and **which** add a new fact regarding the antecedent: 'C 42 is the policeman who informed us about the fire.' Here **who = and he.**

(i) The best example of the purely adjectival or restrictive use of **that** is the well-known story, 'This is the house that Jack built. This is the . . . that . . . house that,' etc.

(ii) 'I gave the book to my brother, who lost it.' Here again, **who = and he.**

(iii) The clause beginning with **that** is not separated from its antecedent by a comma. The clause beginning with **who** may be separated by a comma from its antecedent, in certain cases.—Thus: 'The Russians crossed the Pruth, which (=the crossing) was in fact a declaration of war.'

[1] Here 'that guards' is equivalent to 'guarding.'

The Diction of Prose and the Diction of Poetry

CHAPTER XIX

THE DICTION OF PROSE AND THE DICTION OF POETRY

BEFORE we can be in a position to distinguish the different kinds of words and phrases that are used in Prose and in Poetry, it is necessary to hold strongly and clearly in our minds the different aims, and also the different moods of the Poet and the Prose-writer. The aim of the Poet is to give delight; the aim of the Prose-writer is, for the most part, to give information or ideas. The Poet appeals to the imagination; the Prose-writer to the intellect. The Poet is, as Shakespeare says, 'of imagination all compact'; the Prose-writer is influenced chiefly by his judgment, and his appeal is made to the judgment of his readers. The Poet is worked upon by emotion and even by passion; the Prose-writer keeps his mind cool and level. It is right that we should be carried away by our feelings of admiration for beauty when we walk in a garden of rare and beautiful flowers; but, when we look at an object through a microscope, we must keep our minds quite calm and steady. The Poet is the man of emotions, the Prose-writer prefers, on the whole, a dry light. Where the Poet paints a picture, the Prose-writer draws a map or a plan. The one leans on the imagination; the other deals in truth and hard fact. The one appeals to the sympathetic imagination of his reader;

the other appeals, on the whole, to the common-sense of the majority of sensible people.

The aims and moods of these two kinds of writers being different, it is reasonable to expect that their choice of words should be also different. The English language is enormously rich in words of different meaning and different shades of meaning; and hence it is not difficult for the Poet to select what suits his moods and his passions best. The whole language itself is very much larger than any part of it; and the literary language—that is, the diction which has come to be employed in literature—is a selection from the best parts of the English language. Poetic diction is, again, a selection from the literary language; and various causes have dictated the selection. Poetry, Milton tells us, should be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.'

(i) **Poetry** is usually opposed to **Prose**; but this is a mistake. The proper contradistinctions are: **Poetry** and **Science**; **Prose** and **Verse**; or, **Prose** and **Metre**.

(ii) The word **prose** is a form of the Latin **prorsa** (oratio=straightforward speech); whereas **verse** is **versa** (oratio=turned speech). In writing or in printing prose, we can make a line as long as we please—a mile long, if it were possible; in writing or in printing verse, we have to *turn* at the end of a line, and the length of this line depends entirely on the poet or verse-maker.

(iii) The word **poet** is a Greek word, from the verb *poieō*, to make. It therefore means 'a maker': and he was called 'a maker' or 'a makker' down to the sixteenth century. Sir Philip Sidney says: 'I knowe not whether by lucke or wisdom wee Englishmen have mette with the Greeks, in calling him a *maker*.'

(iv) Among the Romans, prose was also called 'pedestris

oratio' (pedestrian speech), that is, language on foot, not 'mounted'—not elevated.

1. **Simplicity.**—Simplicity may be a quality of prose as well as of poetry. Let us take a few examples of simplicity in poetry; and the best are to be had from Wordsworth, who was always simple when at his best, and always best when he was perfectly simple. In the 'Reverie of Poor Susan' he says:—

> 'At the corner of Wood Street,[1] when daylight appears,
> Hangs a thrush that sings loud—it has sung for three years:
> Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard,
> In the silence of morning, the song of the bird.'

This is perfectly simple; and it is almost as good prose as it is verse. What is it that makes the difference? It is the subdued emotion, the strong sympathy with the country girl—the sympathy that has gathered together the *daylight*, the *thrush*, the *silence*, and the *song*, and has combined them into one poetic whole. Again, Wordsworth tells us of a poor old man—Michael—who had set himself the task of building a sheep-fold, the corner-stone of which had been laid by his son Luke. The boy took to evil courses in London; the heart of the old man seemed to have gone from him; and many a day he went to the fold, meaning to go on with the work—

> 'And never lifted up a single stone.'

Nothing can be simpler than this line. And yet it contains, put into it by the lines that have gone before it, a world of feeling and of despair. Tennyson also, like

[1] A street off Cheapside.

all great artists, employs the simplest words. In his 'Lord of Burleigh' there occurs this verse:—

'And he came to look upon her,
And he looked at her; and said,
"Bring the dress and put it on her
That she wore when she was wed."'

2. Conventional Poetic Diction.—In the eighteenth century there had grown up, chiefly under the influence of Pope, a set of conventional phrases that were regarded as 'poetic,' and the stringing together of which was looked upon as 'poetry.' So much in vogue had this conventional diction become, that some persons could write in the style of Pope nearly as well as Pope himself; and that most of his translation of Homer's 'Odyssey' was not done by Pope himself, but by two of his disciples called Fenton and Broome. These two men had caught the knack and learned the 'poetic' vocabulary of their master; and they could turn off verses for him by the hundred. The nature of this so-called 'poetic diction' can be best seen in comparative columns—the one containing the simple sense of Homer, the other the same sense, dressed in the tawdry finery of Pope.

Homer.	Pope.'
You are like a man that is a king.	I read a monarch in that princely air,
	The same thy aspect, if the same thy care.
He fell upon his neck and kissed him.	He ran, he seized him with a strict embrace;
	With thousand kisses wandered o'er his face.
Two pigs are killed for dinner.	Of two his cutlass launched the spurting blood.
He went to his room to lie down.	His bright alcove the obsequious youth ascends.

3. **The Reaction.**—In no long time people got tired of this sort of thing. It was artificial (whereas poetry ought to draw its nourishment from the elemental and eternal feelings of human nature), it was fashionable, it was forced. Cowper began the reaction; and, in his translation of Homer, used a simpler and a manlier English. Crabbe helped; but the great protagonist of the new and simple style in poetry was Wordsworth. He, disgusted by the tawdry second-hand clothing of poetical ideas introduced by Pope, carried the reaction too far. The pendulum swung to the opposite extreme. He maintained that, 'in works of imagination and sentiment, whether the compositions be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language.' And again: 'There neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' And he carried his practice to an even greater extreme than his theory; and this extreme practice shows itself in too strong—or rather, in too shabby—colours in such verses as—

> 'And Betty's most especial charge
> Was "Johnny, Johnny, mind that you
> Come home again, nor stop at all,—
> Come home again, whate'er befal,
> My Johnny, do, I pray you, do."'

But this is neither poetry nor prose; it is mere drivel. And, from this example alone, we can see that simplicity, unless it is guided by strength, may become, and often does become, the poorest namby-pamby.

4. **Sensuous.**—This epithet means that the poet must use the shows of Nature which are brought to us by the senses as a kind of language to interpret his feelings. Matthew Arnold, in his elegy on the death of his friend

Arthur Clough, laments the departure of his friend, compares it with the parting of the cuckoo before the coming of the 'high Midsummer pomps,' and tells us, in 'sensuous' language, what some of these pomps are:—

'Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.'

And poetry is not only sensuous, it is specific. The poet does not say 'Go! lovely flower!' but 'Go! lovely rose!' He does not say that the song of the nightingale was perhaps heard by Ruth in a foreign land,—but—

'When, sick for home,
She stood in tears *amid the alien corn.*'

5. **Passionate.**—This word **passionate** would not be employed at the present day to express a quality of poetry. We should rather use the word **impassioned.** That the writing of poetry requires strong emotion—that is to say, passion—is evident to every one who reads a page of Shakespeare or of Milton, of Tennyson or of Browning. Even Cowper, tame as he usually is, every now and then shows signs of deep passion; and there are few more 'passionate' verses in the language than the last stanza of Cowper's 'Castaway.' Even in poems the very soul of which is calm and tranquillity, there is to be felt a deep emotion which our forefathers of the seventeenth century would have called 'passion.' Take Tennyson's REQUIESCAT: a poem about a beautiful lady who is dying slowly of consumption:—

'Fair is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides:
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah! how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease:
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.'

6. Poetry and Rhetoric.—The difference between these two can best be shown by examples. Sir Walter Scott, in his poem of ROKEBY, makes one of his characters describe a tropical sunset. And the description runs thus:—

'My noontide India may declare:
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to woods and caves bade fly
The natives from my angry eye!
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the doom of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight glooms his wrath allay;
With disc like battle-target red
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once, and all is night!'

This is forcible, if not powerful, writing, with here and there traces of 'fine writing.' Let us now compare it with a description of the same daily phenomenon in the tropics by a true poet. Coleridge, in the 'Ancient Mariner,' does it in two lines:—

'The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark!'

Instead of 'No pale gradations quench his ray,' we have the short, clear statement, 'The sun's rim dips.' Instead of 'No twilight glooms his wrath allay,' we have 'The stars rush out.' Instead of the sun 'rushing to his burning bed,' we have the swift and true picturesqueness of

'At one stride comes the dark. You look along the surface of the sea, and you see the dipping of the rim of the sun; you look up, and the stars are out! The poet sees with his inward eye and reports the truth and beauty of what he saw in the fewest, fittest, and most telling words. The rhetorician writes about a subject and about it; he makes as many words as he can; he hangs round his subject as many fine phrases as he can invent. Sometimes, even in the copiousness of his verbosity, he hits upon a happy description or a true rendering of a beautiful thought; but that is not the object he has aimed at. 'Poetry,' says Matthew Arnold—and well, 'is thought and art in one.' That is to say, the emotion and the expression of it, the perception and the expression of it, the thought and the expression of it—each forms one indissoluble whole, just as the body and the soul do in our present state of existence.

7. **How to Appreciate good Poetry.**—The best way is to trust to oneself. Let the young student read over and over again what he admires; and, if he has time, let him learn the lines by heart. He may begin with Longfellow, whose poetry is not deep nor his art high, but who has every now and then lines of a sweet naturalness which sing themselves into the memory. Rising on stepping-stones of past enjoyment, he will climb into more beautiful regions of thought and poetry, will be able to appreciate and to enjoy Keats and Matthew Arnold and Tennyson and Browning. Matthew Arnold, who was as fine a critic as he was a true poet, gives a direction for learners which is of great value. 'There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions

of the great masters.' And he gives as instances, the dying request of Hamlet to Horatio :—

'If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile.'

And the lines of Milton describing Satan :—

. . . 'Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Arch-angel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek.' . . .

We can employ the same suggestion in the poetry of Matthew Arnold himself. In his THYRSIS (the elegy on the death of Arthur Clough) he has many lines which are at once exquisite in music and perfect in expression. In his descriptions of country scenery he is particularly happy :—

'And blue-bells trembling by the forest ways.'

So, some tempestuous morn in early June
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er.'

'And in the scattered farms the lights come out.'

'The sunlight in the happy glens is fair.'

'The gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.'

In these, and many other lines, Matthew Arnold hits the nail on the head; he sees true, and he speaks true. He combines two high qualities of poetry—'truth and sensuousness.'

8. **The Diction of Poetry.**—As Poetry concerns itself with the permanent elements and qualities in human nature, it is not tied down to the use of the transitory language of the day, it can draw on the past as well as on the present. The tendency, therefore, among poets is to employ now and then old-fashioned or archaic words

and phrases. This was particularly the case with Spenser. He wrote in a language that was not in use in his own time; he intentionally employed antique and old-fashioned words and phrases, because he was describing persons and events that lay far behind and outside of his own generation. This made Ben Jonson say of him, 'Spenser writ no language.' He uses words like **bale** and **baleful**; **astonied**; **dole** and **doleful**; **errant** (for wandering); **fell** and **fellness**; **mirk** (for dark); **stound** (for a moment of time); **thrall** (for a slave); and many more. In much the same way, poets employ words like **meseems, methinks, haply,** and others. It is plain to every person of common-sense that these words, and words such as these, cannot be fittingly introduced into English prose.

9. **The Diction of Prose** (i).—Nor can Prose speak of the sky as the 'welkin,' or of a windy sky as 'the breezy blue'; or of a sensible man as 'a sage'; or of bees gathering honey as 'the buzzings of the honied hours' (Tennyson); or say, for the sun set, 'the sun burnt the threshold of the Night.' Poetry can make a free and even ornamental use of epithet; in Prose, only those epithets that are absolutely necessary can be employed. Poetry speaks and can rightly speak of the 'tawny lion,' the 'red gold,' the 'gallant knight,' and so on; but such epithets would, in a prose composition, be mere affectation. When (in Matthew Arnold's poem of TRISTRAM AND ISEULT) the lady speaks of

'Silken courtiers whispering honied nothings,'

the two epithets, *silken* and *honied*, are not merely ornamental, they bring to the eye and to the ear the dress of the courtiers and the empty nature of their compliments. Poetry can use 'questionless' for 'unquestionably'; 'scarce' for 'scarcely'; 'vale' for 'valley'; 'marge' for 'margin'; but Prose cannot make use of such words.

The use of these would be a mark of affectation; and affectation is the worst vice that a writer of good prose can be guilty of. Professor Freeman talks of Flambard as the man 'that ere drave all William's gemôts,' meaning, that 'formerly led all William's parliaments'; but these are inadmissible and intolerable archaisms.

(i) The following sentence is quoted from BURKE by Professor Earle as an example of the effective use of adjectives: 'A peaceful, honourable, and affluent decline of life must be purchased by a laborious or hazardous youth.

(ii) The following is from a review of CHARLES LAMB'S prose: 'The exquisite humour, the womanly tenderness, which inform and imbue each other with perfect life and faultless grace; the matchless refinement of his criticism, the incomparable spontaneity of his style,—all these it is easy, if it is not impertinent, to praise.'

10. The Diction of Prose (ii).—A writer of Prose, of course, has at his command all the resources of the language—with the exception of those words and phrases that have received an imaginative colouring from having been employed by poets in verse. Must then Prose be always dry and hard in style like the proof of a proposition in geometry? Not at all. There is room for gaiety, for humour, for picturesqueness. Only these qualities must not be introduced arbitrarily—must not be mere ornament laid on, like putty 'ornaments' on shoddy furniture: they must be akin to the subject, called for naturally by the mood of mind generated by the subject. In this case they will never be out of place. Dr. Abbott says excellently, 'We may use picturesque diction where the picturesqueness is a part of the information which we desire to give.' And he gives as an example, 'Accustomed to the arid and barren deserts of Arabia, the eye of the returning soldier rested with pleasure upon the rich, bright vegetation of the Emerald Isle.' It is plain that,

in this sentence, the poetic phrase, 'Emerald Isle,' gives information, and gives it with the vividness that is produced by the strong contrast with the brown, arid surface of Arabian deserts.

11. **Rhythmical but not Metrical Diction.**—There must be in every prose sentence an agreeable rhythm; but there ought to be no metre, and no approach to metre. Some impassioned writers of prose, like Dickens and Professor Wilson, every now and again break into a kind of iambic verse, which forms an unpleasant interference with the usual rhythm of good prose writing. Dickens has, in the middle of his ordinary prose, lines like—

> 'As for the burial of yesterday,
> It stops to listen, and goes rustling on.'[1]

Some writers fall into a jog-trot, which at length shapes itself into trochaic metre, like the metre of Longfellow's 'Hiawatha.'

12. **The Type of Good Prose.**—What is the type—the living model—of good prose? It is evidently sensible speaking. To this of course must be added more clearness and exactness than we are accustomed to give to our conversation. Such speaking may be lively and pleasant, yet it need not rise above a certain level, and will certainly not excite itself into a shriek. A sensible tone of this kind is readily perceived in the prose of John Locke, who was the very genius of common-sense; and it is to be found in almost every chapter of his work on Education. 'Prose literature,' says Professor Earle, 'demands a certain moderate elevation, below the pitch of poetry, but yet distinctly raised above the colloquial. There are degrees of elevation according to the conditions of the writer, the subject, and the occasion.'

[1] Quoted by Dr. Abbott.

The Chief Divisions of Prose Style

CHAPTER XX

THE CHIEF DIVISIONS OF PROSE STYLE

1. **Divisions according to Matter.**—The mind of a person writing is in one mood when he is trying to write History, in another mood when he is discussing Politics or Ethics, and in a quite different mood when he is handling a subject belonging to Science. In writing History, strong and deep sympathy is required, the imagination is stirred, even the passions glow as a brave deed is recorded or the plan of a difficult campaign is described. In writing on Science, complete accuracy is the one indispensable requisite; and the style may be cold, dry, and even hard. In writing an Essay, again (and an essay is generally written on some subject that is interesting to all—interesting to our common Humanity), the mind of the writer is in a quiet contemplative mood; and this tone is the tone of a thoughtful well-bred speaker.

Once more, the style of a romance is, and must be, different from the style of a leading article, because the moods of the two writers of such styles are as different as they can well be. And not only the mood and tone of such writings differ, the matter of them is of an essentially different nature. History treats of past events and long-dead characters; the Essay discusses the permanent elements of humanity; Science examines and analyses the phenomena of external things; Travels contain some account of what the Traveller saw and experienced; a Romance is a story which deals almost exclusively with

the heroic and extraordinary sides of life; a Novel is an imaginative story about the relations to each other of men and women in society.

'A man speaks in a very different manner according as he is conversing at the dinner-table, or holding a literary discussion, or arguing in a law-court, or addressing a public meeting or a congregation; and every different shade in speaking will be represented in writing. But the differences will consist almost entirely in the *rhythm* of the sentences, in the use of *question* instead of statement, of *short* sentences instead of long ones, *not in words*, which will be very nearly the same throughout.'—Dr. Abbott.

2. Divisions according to Time.—Prose style varies greatly according to the century in which it was written. Pure Saxon prose is a somewhat clumsy, flat-footed, dull medium for thought; and it was not till our language was well mixed with Norman-French that there was much life or spring or vigour or rhythm in our sentences. From the time of Francis Bacon our prose has been improving in every respect; and we can observe a marked difference for the better in each succeeding century. The prose of the seventeenth century is quite different from the prose of the eighteenth; and again, the prose of the middle of the eighteenth differs enormously from the prose that is written at the present day. The prose of The Times, of the Spectator, of the Saturday Review is as different from the prose of Addison, or Steele, or Dr. Johnson as is the dress of the present time from the wig, the ruffles, the flowered waistcoat, the knee-breeches,and the silver buckles of the modish dandy of the eighteenth century.

'The focus of English Prose is now to be sought in the periodical press. Articles in newspapers are written by men of the highest education, men of literary culture and of good social tone; their writings are the most widely read

of all that is written, and they undoubtedly represent, in the broadest sense of the word, the current standard of English Prose.'—PROFESSOR EARLE.

3. **Divisions according to Writers.** — Every writer has his own style, as he has his own face. And as the face is the record of the experience, the thoughts, and the emotions of the man, so the style is the record and the result of all the author has read and heard and thought and felt. His style bears traces of all his experience, whether of life or of books. And, as we learn to know one face from another by silent and almost unconscious observation, so we learn to know one style from another by dwelling for some time with each, and quietly absorbing their different qualities, so that at last we come to know and to distinguish them with immediateness and with ease. We can very soon learn to distinguish the easy and living narrative style of Sir Walter Scott from the exquisite and gentle irony of Jane Austen. We cannot mistake the clear and rapid English of Macaulay for the crabbed picturesqueness of Carlyle; we can recognise at once the brilliant imaginative power of Green, and the painful accuracy combined with archaic English of Professor Freeman. We know the glowing periods, the splendid thought, the glorious sweep of expression of Ruskin, and cannot confuse it with the firm incisiveness of an essayist like Hazlitt.

4. **Style a resultant of three forces.**—In estimating the character of an author's style, we must keep three things in mind: the subject he is writing about; the kind of English at his command—that is, the English of his century; and the author's own powers and experience. The subject will not entirely dictate the style; the English of the writer's period will not entirely control it; the writer himself must form his style subject to all

the influences that have played upon his mind since first he began to read, to observe, and to think.

Some young writers find a difficulty in determining whether they shall use the old-fashioned English adverb, or the more modern form with **ly**. Their own native feeling for idiom must settle the question. No one who had been in the habit of reading good English authors would ever think of saying, 'Pray, speak more loudly.' He would say, quite simply, 'Pray, speak louder!' We should not dream of saying, 'Run quickly!' but 'Run quick—as quick as you can!' The adverb without inflexion which is used in so many idiomatic phrases is called by Professor Earle 'the flat adverb'; those which are inflected—like **needs, upwards, truly, chiefly,** etc.—he calls flexional adverbs. Thus we are in the habit of saying: Work hard; walk fast; go slower; speak louder; speak low; tell me true; cut deep; work long; stand firm; and many others.

(i) In Old English, the dative of an adjective was used as an adverb. Then 'The sun shone brightly' was 'The sun shone brighte,' and this form lasted down even into the fifteenth century.

(ii) This custom accounts for the continued existence of the 'flat adverb' in modern English poetry. Tennyson writes—

'And **slow** and **sure** comes up the golden year.'

Pope has—

'Hope springs **eternal** in the human breast.'

He combines both kinds of adverb in one line—

'Who sings so **loudly** and who sings so **long**?'

Milton has—

Whence Adam falt'ring **long**, thus answered **brief**.'

And Shakespeare uses even Latin adverbs in the same way, in such phrases as 'indifferent cold,' 'an excellent good name,' 'passing fair,' 'exceeding ill,' etc. In the Authorised Translation of the Bible we even find: 'Their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.'

Common Errors in English and in Grammar

CHAPTER XXI

SOME COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH AND IN GRAMMAR

THERE are certain errors which are very prevalent in English Composition; and the following sentences contain the most usual of them. The student ought always to be prepared to give a clear and adequate statement of the reasons for the alteration he makes; and this statement should be given in as brief a form as possible.

Dislocation and Confusion of Sense.

The committee would further recommend some change in the internal arrangements of the building, as a large number of seats have long been occupied by the scholars that have no backs.

DISLOCATION. 'That have no backs' should come after 'seats.'

It was just at this time that the handwriting appeared upon the wall which Daniel interpreted.

DISLOCATION. 'Which Daniel interpreted' ought to come after 'handwriting.'

The carriage stopped at the small gate which led by a short gravel walk to the house amidst the nods and smiles of the whole party.

DISLOCATION. 'Amidst the nods,' etc., ought to come immediately after 'stopped.'

We have two school-rooms sufficiently large to accommodate one hundred and fifty pupils, one above the other.

DISLOCATION. 'One above the other' ought to come immediately after 'school-rooms,' for the simple reason that the phrase belongs to this noun.

Mr. Carlyle has taught us that silence is golden in thirty volumes.

DISLOCATION. 'In thirty volumes' should come immediately after 'taught us.'

After meals they drink their coffee and smoke their cigarettes, women as well as men.

DISLOCATION. 'Women as well as men' should come immediately after 'they—women,' etc.

He blew out his brains after bidding his wife good-bye with a gun.

DISLOCATION. 'With a gun' should come after 'brains.'

The West End is considerably worked up over the mysterious disappearance from home of Mr. Jenkins, who resides at 45 William Street, without the knowledge of his friends and relatives.

DISLOCATION. 'Without the knowledge,' etc., ought to come immediately after 'from home.'

Five pounds reward is offered for the discovery of any person injuring this property by order of the chief of police.

DISLOCATION. 'By order of,' etc., ought to be put at the beginning of the sentence.

This monument was erected to the memory of John Smith, who was shot, as a mark of affection by his brother.

'As a mark,' etc., should come after 'was erected.'

'No,' said the bashful boy, 'but I have wished that I could drop through the floor a thousand times.'

'A thousand times' belongs to 'have wished.'

Mrs. Smith was killed on Wednesday morning while cooking her husband's breakfast in a shocking manner.

'In a shocking manner' should come immediately after 'killed.'

A number of persons were poisoned by eating ice-cream at a party that was flavoured with peach-leaves.

'At a party' goes with 'eating,' and should come immediately after it.

Here is a fresh basket of eggs.

'Fresh' goes with 'eggs.'

Awkward Repetition of Words.

The very things which I needed for the journey which I was going to make were not to be procured in the little village which was then my home.

Too many *which*es. The first two might be left out.

No learning is generally so dearly bought, or so valuable when it is bought, as the learning that we learn in the school of experience.

The word 'learn' is too frequently repeated. It would be better to say 'that we gain' or 'that we acquire.'

The subject of which I shall now treat is not a subject of general interest; but no other subject is of greater importance to the subjects of this kingdom.

The three repetitions of the word 'subject' is unpleasant to the ear; and the use of the word in two senses in the latter part of the sentence is a shock to our sense of logic.

The public library will be of special value, especially to young men.

'Special' followed by 'especially' is unpleasant to the ear. Say 'of great value.'

He can can fruit better than mother can.

'Can can' will never do. Say 'He shows more skill in canning fruit than mother does.'

Obscurity of Meaning.

The verses rank several degrees lower in the scale of beauty, or rather the lack of it.

We ought to say 'in the lack of it.'

The dandies of that day used the abominable art of painting their faces as well as the women.

'As well as the women' ought to come immediately after 'dandies.'

'Prisoner at the bar, Providence has gifted you with an honest up-bringing and a good education, instead of which you go about the country stealing ducks.'

For 'instead of which' we should read 'nevertheless,' and separate the clauses by a semicolon.

The house, now that it is finished, presents a cosy and snug appearance, and it really is so.

'Is so' can refer to nothing. Say 'is what it seems.'

Here is a capital novel which I am going to sit on the ground and read.

A very common form of error. The sentence could be corrected by inserting 'with' after 'ground.'

The state ought to pay the schoolmaster instead of the private individual.

Meaning quite ambiguous. Rather 'instead of letting the private individual do so.' The state does not pay the private individual.

The boy replied that he had met no one, or if he had, that they had passed him unnoticed.

A hopeless mix. Read 'or if he had met any one, the person had passed him unnoticed.'

'And which,' etc.

We did not find anything in the domestic architecture

very characteristic, and which spoke even in the mildest way of Roman power or Gothic force.

If we have an 'and which,' we ought also to have a 'which.' Say 'which was very characteristic.'

His is a style abounding in strength and vivacity *and which* never transgresses the bounds of literary propriety.

There is no 'which': there cannot therefore be an 'and which.' We can retain the 'and which' if we say 'which abounds.'

The child had a scratch on the arm, which the mother could not account for, and took a long time to heal.

Here we must insert 'which' after 'and.'

A falsehood may be implied by a glance or gesture merely, but which is as bad as a downright untruth.

For 'but which' read 'such a falsehood.' There is no 'which' preceding to justify a succeeding 'but which.'

Misuse of Adverbs.

Pray speak more loudly.

This is good grammar (rather cast-iron, mechanical grammar), but bad English. It should be 'Speak louder.'

The construction sounds rather harshly.

'Sounds harsh' is right.

How sourly these currants taste!

'How sour.' Shakespeare does not say 'How sweetly the moonlight sleeps upon this bank,' but 'How sweet.'

She seems amiably enough.

Verbs like 'seems,' looks,' 'smells,' 'shines,' 'sleeps'—all of which are neuter verbs—take an adjective with them, and not an adverb. We say 'looks beautiful,' 'shines bright,' 'sleeps sound,' etc.

Inharmonious Combination.

We should constantly observe the way words are used by the best writers.

'Way words' is an inharmonious combination. We ought to put 'in which' after 'way.'

The reason is that one is constantly enjoying himself all the time with the countless beauties which he sees, so that when he returns home, it seems as though he had not seen half the scenes which there are to be seen.

'Seen the scenes to be seen' is a most annoying collocation. 'Seen half the beautiful landscapes' would be better.

He used to use many expressions not usually used.

Another ill-sounding collocation. Say 'He was in the habit of employing many expressions not generally used.'

A mild child is liked better than a wild child.

The ending *ild* is unmusical and monotonous. Say 'A gentle child is liked better than one who is wayward.'

It is one of the greatest delights a lover of nature can have to have a country ramble in the spring-time.

'Can have to have' is very ugly. Make the first 'have' into 'enjoy.'

Over-crowded Sentences.

Cheops built the largest pyramid in Egypt which bears his name.

There are really two sentences here; and they are so mixed up together that an incongruous statement is the result. We ought to write: 'Cheops built the largest pyramid in Egypt; and it bears his name.'

The weight of the skeleton alone was thirty-one tons, and was afterwards exhibited in London and Paris.

It was not the 'weight' that was exhibited. The whole sentence should be recast. 'The skeleton alone weighed . . . and was exhibited.'

The Archdeacon is represented in life-size and stands in front of a red curtain and by a chair covered with red stuff on which lie his coat, hat, and a roll of paper, engaged in conversation.

DISLOCATION. The sentence ought to be broken up into two. 'The Archdeacon is represented in life-size and as engaged in conversation. He stands in front,' etc.

Soon the sky grew dark and then darker, until it was almost black, then the thunder began, and soon came the rain, and all nature was refreshed, but we were more than refreshed, as we could find no shelter.

This sentence is twaddle. It ought to be broken up into three. The first should end at 'black. The second at 'refreshed.' Then the third should run like this: 'We, however, were more than refreshed—we were drenched to the skin, as,' etc.

The horses stood still, but we got out, and the snow was coming down very fast, so the path was difficult to find, but home was reached at last.

Too large a number of different subjects. 'Horses,' 'we,' 'snow,' 'path,' and 'home' completely prevent any feeling of unity in the sentence. The sentence might very well be broken up into three.

There is on exhibition at the High School a map of Italy drawn by a pupil seven feet long and four and a half feet wide.

This sentence should be made into two, the second should run, 'The map was drawn by a pupil of the school.'

Tautology and Redundancy.

We are both agreed that the sentence is wrong.

TAUTOLOGY. One cannot be 'agreed' without the other. It requires two persons to make an agreement, as well as two persons to have a quarrel. Therefore 'both' is unnecessary.

It was founded mainly on the entire monopoly of the whole trade with the colonies.

Here 'entire' and 'whole' are tautological, and should be omitted. For 'monopoly' implies 'entire possession' or 'possession of the whole.'

Elections, as a rule, are often very hard fought.

Here 'as a rule' and 'often' destroy each other. Omit one or the other.

England and her colonies are closely united together.

If they are united, they must be together. Therefore omit 'together.'

It follows as a consequence that he who runs may read.

Leave out 'as a consequence.' 'It follows'='it is a consequence.'

The tiger is equally as strong an animal as the lion.

'Equally' is superfluous.

Errors in the Use of the Participle.

The remains of a man killed forty years ago were discovered, ploughing in a side field.

The participle 'ploughing,' being an adjective, must belong to a noun. The only noun it can belong to is 'man.' But, as the 'man' is dead, this is impossible. After 'discovered' we must supply 'by a farm-servant.'

I counted twenty-five meteors, the other night, sitting on the front piazza.

'Sitting' belongs to 'I,' and should therefore go with it. 'Sitting on,' etc., should begin the sentence.

When the cat came into the room, feeling tired, I laid aside my work and began to talk to her.

'Feeling tired' belongs to 'I,' and should come after it.

Alarmed at the news, the boat was launched at once.

The boat could not have been alarmed. Read 'The crew, alarmed at the news, launched the boat at once.'

Being a lawyer, we may suppose he knows some law.

This is not absolutely wrong, though the participle is so placed that it seems to agree with 'we.' Rather 'He, being a lawyer, may be supposed to know,' etc.

The Queen's education was carefully looked after by her mother and Viscount Melbourne, deriving from the latter some part of her political insight.

'Deriving' has no noun with which it can agree. Substitute for it 'she derived,' and divide the clauses by a semicolon.

Viewing war in early times, it does not seem so terrible, as civilisation was not then far advanced.

There is nothing with which 'viewing' can agree. Say 'War viewed in early times does not,' etc.

Hoping you are well, believe me, etc.

An exceedingly common error. The subject of 'believe' is 'you' understood. 'Hoping' cannot therefore agree with that subject. Recast: 'Hoping, etc. . . . I am yours truly.'

Having perceived the weakness of his poems, they now reappear to us under new titles.

'They' must go with 'having perceived'; but this is nonsense.

Incongruous Facts and Bathos.

The cellar of the school-house is still somewhat visible, in which a girl of thirteen years saved herself from the tomahawk in the massacre, and afterwards became the wife of a Methodist minister.

Incongruous facts. If the last statement is made at all, it ought to stand in a sentence by itself: 'She afterwards became,' etc.

Another girl, eight years of age, secreted and saved herself under the flooring of the house, whose husband, in later years, was one of the trustees of Whitman College.

Absurd Collocation. If the last statement is made at all, it should be made in a separate sentence. 'Her husband,' etc.

The flood destroyed life and property and washed away thousands of hen-coops.

BATHOS. A very feeble ending. The last circumstance, if mentioned at all, ought to be mentioned in connection with a set of circumstances of a similar character.

His death was due to nervous prostration, and he had reached the age of forty-seven years.

Dissimilar facts. The unity of the sentence is destroyed.

They told stories and read newspapers that were months old, that were left by some traveller on his way to the Catskills, which were then and are now noted for their scenery.

Collocation of dissimilars. The Catskills and their scenery are improperly mixed up with the habits of the people.

A violent storm drove me to the coast of Sardinia, which is free from all poisonous herbs except one, which resembles parsley, and causes those who eat it to die of laughing.

A sentence quite without unity. The 'violent storm' is mixed up with 'poisonous herbs except one' and its effects on those who eat of it.

Washington died of a sore throat, and was six feet three inches tall.

This is the incongruous in excelsis.

He feared this step might lead to ruin, and perhaps land him in poverty.

BATHOS. Ruin is more terrible than poverty. Alter the arrangement.

Sequence of Tenses.

He has already and will in future, study German.

The 'has' and the 'will' cannot both go with the infinitive 'study.' The sentence should run thus: 'He has already studied German, and he will continue to do so in future.' The absurdity arises from the desire for too great brevity.

Human beings have and do inhabit these dreary regions.

Too great brevity. The words should be: 'Have inhabited and still inhabit.'

We did no more than it was our duty to have done.

'To have done' should be 'to do.' The doing belonged to the time of the duty; but the form 'to have done' makes it precede the duty: which is impossible.

I meant to have written the answer to-morrow.

The writing and the meaning to write are contemporaneous. It ought to be 'I meant to write.' 'To have written to-morrow,' that is, at a future time, is absurd.

Mr. Fogg intended to have seen for himself how the work was progressing.

The intention and the seeing were contemporaneous. It ought to be 'intended to see.'

I forgot to have mentioned the fact.

Say 'to mention.'

He finds delight in wandering through some quiet wood, and to listen to the songs of the birds.

For 'to listen' put 'in listening,' or omit the 'and.'

They should try and improve themselves, so that they might command higher wages.

'Should—might' is a wrong sequence. Read 'should try *to* improve . . . so that they may,' etc.

They should take more exercise so that they might be stronger.

'Might' should be may. 'They should take' is future; 'might' is past; but a future cannot be followed by a past.

Illogical or Misappropriate Use of Words.

He walked to the table and took up his hat and bade adieu to his host and took his departure.

'Took' in two senses is illogical. Nor does the sentence require so many *and*'s. It would be better: 'He walked to the table, lifted his hat, bade adieu to his host, and took his departure.'

The general ordered the captain to order the soldiers to observe good order.

'Order' in two senses is inadmissible. Better: 'The general told the captain to command the soldiers,' etc.

I've heard that story of hers no less than a dozen times.

'Less' belongs to size; 'fewer' to number.

The field of turnips was absolutely decimated by the frost; scarce a root was left untouched.

'To decimate' means 'to take every *tenth*' (man or turnip). Yet nearly *all* the roots were spoiled. For 'absolutely decimated' read 'nearly all destroyed.'

The statement may to some extent be perfectly true.

If the statement be true only 'to some extent,' it cannot be 'perfectly' true. Omit one or the other.

The tradition about Canute's rebuking his courtiers, whether the fact be true or not, shows the reputation for sound sense which that king enjoyed.

For 'fact' substitute 'story.' A fact—something that has happened—must always be true.

There were three alternatives open.

An 'alternative' means 'one of two.' For 'alternatives' read 'different courses.'

These vices are apt to degenerate a man's character.

'Degenerate' is a neuter verb and cannot govern an object. Read 'apt to make a man's character degenerate.'

Our army in the Soudan can only be subsisted at an enormous expense.

For 'subsisted' read 'provisioned.' 'To subsist' is a neuter verb and has no passive voice.

He was predeceased by his sister.

A thoroughly bad, but very common usage. There is no active transitive verb 'to predecease.' Therefore there can be no such passive verb. Simply say 'His sister died before him.'

A journey on the Continent is very pleasant, and it can be done very cheaply.

'Made' is better.

It is hard to find an avocation best suited for a boy.

Say 'vocation.' An avocation is that which takes one 'away' from one's vocation.

There was not a shadow of a whisper heard.

A 'whisper' cannot cast a shadow.

The scouts had not advanced far till they were attacked.

'Till' should be 'when.'

The well supplied them with an almost boundless source of water.

'Boundless' refers to 'bounds' or 'limits.' The word used should be 'inexhaustible.'

Extravagance of Language.

I am extremely glad to see you, and exceedingly sorry that I have kept you waiting so terribly long.

Here the superlatives are overdone. 'Very glad' and 'very long' would be sufficient.

Do you see that monstrous large bird which this very minute flew out of the identical tree under which you are sitting?

'Monstrous' is not now used as an adverb, and cannot therefore go with 'large.' The word 'identical' is superfluous.

Mary is extravagantly fond of those exquisitely beautiful water-lilies which are so extremely abundant on the lake.

Three superlatives of an unmitigated kind.

Such words as unprecedented, most extraordinary, incalculable, boundless, extremely, awfully, frightfully, stupendous, etc., should not be used unless we know that they are true and appropriate.

Pleonasm.

He seems to enjoy the universal esteem of all men.

The idea of 'universal' includes the idea of 'all.' We should, therefore, either omit 'universal,' or leave out 'of all men' and simply say 'universal esteem.'

That seems to be the most universal opinion.

'Universal' is an adjective which cannot admit of comparison.

A fondness for display is of all other follies the most ridiculous.

'Other' is quite superfluous. 'A fondness for display' is a folly, and it is included among 'all follies'; it cannot belong to the class 'other follies.'

There is little fear of education becoming less universal in the future.

'Universal' is an adjective which is incapable of comparison.

He brought his speech to a final conclusion.

'Final' is superfluous.

Slipshod Construction.

After we came to anchor, they put me on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness.

A sentence too loose. If it is kept in its present form, the phrase 'who received me' should be left out, and 'with the greatest kindness' placed after 'welcomed.'

Bills are requested to be paid quarterly.

This should be: 'It is requested that bills be paid quarterly.'

The riches of the temple gradually disappeared, but by whom, or when, is not known.

For 'by whom' read 'how.'

I believe that when he died the Cardinal spoke at least fifty languages.

Read 'before his death was master of at least,' etc.

Smith had a painful complaint, which, sometimes keeping him awake, made him sleep, perhaps, when it did come, the deeper.

'It' refers to nothing at all. Substitute for it 'sleep.'

He continued till all his money was gone, on which, when his friends knew, they determined to leave him to his fate.

Recast the last half: 'On his friends getting to know this, they determined,' etc.

Errors in the Use of Pronouns.

(*a*) The oldest is a boy whom I think deserves encouragement.

'Whom' is not governed by 'think'; it is the nominative to 'deserves.' This can be easily seen if we put 'I think' in a parenthesis. 'A boy who (I think) deserves,' etc.

I saw the man whom we thought was dead.

'Whom' should be 'who.' It is the nominative to the verb 'was.'

The oldest daughter married a banker whom they say is very wealthy.

'Whom' should be 'who.' It is the nominative to the verb 'is.' It is not governed by 'say.' This can at once be seen by putting 'they say' within a parenthesis.

We met Mr. and Mrs. Murray, whom we thought very delightful people.

'Whom' is quite right. It is governed by the transitive verb 'thought,' though it comes before it. The sentence might have been cast thus: 'and we thought them,' etc.

Whom did you say called this afternoon?

If this is right, the verb 'called' has no nominative. It is plain that 'whom' should be 'who.' Transpose the parts of the sentence, and all is plain: 'Who called this afternoon, did you say?'

Whom do you think I am?

The verb 'think' does not govern 'whom.' It governs the whole sentence 'who I am.'

(*b*) The question of us going to London is not decided.

It should be, 'Of our going.'

The fact of them being in the neighbourhood was very suspicious.

Say 'their being.'

What do you think of me studying Latin?

Say 'my.'

His father was opposed to him entering the army.

Say 'his.'

The pupil's progress will depend largely upon him being diligent in practice.

Say 'his being.'

(*c*) If any one does not know the reason, they should ask.

'He' should ask; because the pronoun 'he' must refer to 'any one,' which is singular.

A person who is resolute and energetic is apt to succeed in their undertakings.

'Their' ought to be 'his.' 'Their' is a plural pronoun, and must therefore refer to a plural noun. It would be right if we were to say 'Persons who are.'

Everybody has reflections which they think worth recording.

'They' is plural, and therefore cannot refer to the singular pronoun 'everybody.' It ought to be 'which he thinks.'

The hen looked very disconsolate when its brood rushed into the water.

'Its' should be 'her.'

Has everybody finished their exercises?

'Their' is plural, and cannot be allowed to refer to the singular noun 'everybody.' Say 'his exercise.' If the school is a girls' school, say 'her exercise.'

The country will be ruined by the profligacy of their nobles.

'The country' is singular; 'their' is plural. Say 'her nobles.'

(*d*) Any one of these two roads will take you to the town.

'Any one' can be used when we speak of a number more than two. In the case of 'two,' we must say 'either.'

I do not admire either of the three girls.

We can only say 'either of two.'

Neither of the twelve jurors could be induced to believe the prisoner guilty.

'Neither' can only be said of 'two.' It should be 'None of the twelve jurors,' etc.

Let two straight lines cut one another.

Say 'each other.'

(*e*) I am one of those who cannot describe what I do not see.

'I' puts himself into a set—the set of 'those who cannot describe what *they* do not see.' Then he takes himself out of the set.

Ask the murderer, he who has steeped his hands in the blood of another.

'He' is in apposition with 'murderer' and should therefore be 'him.'

Each of the children have their own peculiar traits.

'Each' is a word with a 'singular' meaning. The verb ought therefore to be singular—'has'; also the pronoun 'his.' (If we wish to be extremely particular, we might say 'his or her.')

If fresh milk does not seem to agree with the child, boil it.

Say 'boil the milk.'

Some public man was mentioned—I forget whom.

'Whom' ought to be 'who.' The verb 'forget' does not govern 'whom,' it governs the sentence 'who it was.'

Go with mean people and we think the world mean.

'We think' must be 'you think.' The subject of 'go' understood is in the second person, and the subject of think must be in the same person.

Nor have I met any one with whom I can talk more easily, or I would prefer as my companion.

'Whom' must be inserted after 'or.'

It is characteristic of them to appear but to one person, and he the most likely to be deluded.

'He' should be 'him'—the pronoun in apposition to 'person,' which is in the objective case.

Who is this letter for?

The strict grammar is 'whom.' But the appearance of being too careful about inflections makes most people say 'who.'

'Each other' and 'one another.'

Parents like to see their children kind to each other.

This is right if there were only two children. If there were more, we must say 'to one another.'

Two negatives in English destroy one another.

Here we must say 'each other.'

The two John Smiths are not related to one another.

'Each other' is right.

Two messengers were sent after one another to tell the good news.

'One another' should be 'each other.'

'Without' and 'except' for 'unless.'

Mother will not let us go without it stops raining.

Say 'unless.'

Do not write except you feel in the mood for it.

Say 'unless.'

The book has no real merit, except its simplicity may be regarded as a charm.

Say 'unless.'

Without you understand the relations of words, you cannot read well.

'Without' should be 'unless.'

Errors in the Use of 'will.'

I will be a thousand miles from home by this time to-morrow.

The speaker does not *will* this. He merely states a further fact, which does not depend on his will. We should say 'I shall be,' etc.

Will you be likely to meet the postman?

The likeliness of meeting the postman does not depend on the will of any one. It is a mere future event; and we must say 'Shall you be.'

'Like' as a Conjunction.

You eat it with a spoon, like you would custard.

'Like' is not a conjunction, and cannot be used as one. It ought to be 'as.'

She watches me like a cat watches a mouse.

'Like' should be 'as.' Or we might say, 'Like a cat watching.'

I wish I could write like our teacher can.

'Like' cannot be used as a conjunction. Say 'as well as.'

Charlie is a timid, nervous child, like his father was.

Say 'as his father was, when young.'

Wrong Sequences of Words.

How different this house is to what we expected!

We must say 'different from.'

Her success is neither the result of system or strategy.

There are two errors in this sentence. 'Neither' takes 'nor' after it. The 'neither' and the 'nor' do not separate 'result' from any other word: they separate the phrases 'of system' and 'of strategy' (the 'of' must be repeated).

Scarcely had he spoken than the fairy disappeared.

'Than' should be 'when.'

St. Paul says, you know, that we must be at peace between ourselves.

'Between,' if there are only two persons; 'among,' if more than two.

In estimating the labours of the German Reformer, we must neither forget the temper of the man nor the age in which he lived.

'Neither' does not belong to 'forget.' We must say 'neither the temper . . . nor the age.'

She neither moved, spoke, or wept during all those sad days.

'Neither' cannot be said of three things. We should say 'She neither moved nor spoke; she neither spoke nor wept,' etc.

She is fairer, but not so amiable as her sister.

We cannot say 'fairer as.' The sentence should run thus: 'She is fairer than her sister, but not so amiable.'

No place is so much visited, or more widely known than this cave.

We cannot say 'so much visited than.' Insert 'as' after 'visited.'

We should select such a profession which will suit us.

'Such a profession as will,' or 'a profession that will.'

No sooner than James ascended the throne, but he began . . .

Read 'No sooner had . . ., than,' etc.

Every man should enter such a profession which will suit him.

'Such' must be followed by 'as.'

Characters that we can at a glance judge all that is in them are for the most part shallow.

'That' ought to be 'such as.'

Comparison of Adjectives.

Lake Superior is the largest of any lake in the world.

'Largest of any' is an impossible construction. 'Largest of all the lakes' is right.

Of the two bicycles, the smallest is the safest.

This is not quite correct grammar; but it is quite usual English. It would give an air of affected accuracy to say 'the smaller is the safer.' This is one of several cases in which the Genius of the English Language says, 'Ego sum supra Grammaticam.'

London is more populous than any city in Great Britain.

We can say 'more populous than any other city' or 'the most populous of all the cities.'

St. Paul's is the greatest of all other London churches.

In this sentence 'St. Paul's' is rightly included in the class 'London churches'; and yet, by the use of 'other,' it is at the same time excluded.

The climate of Cromer is said to be the healthiest of any other in Great Britain.

Say 'healthier than any other'; or, 'the healthiest of all the climates of,' etc.

Which is the best of the two?

This is not good grammar; but it is usual English.

Which is most desirable, health or wealth?

The question is a somewhat formal one, and therefore we had better use formal grammar and say 'more desirable.'

Concord of Noun and Verb, etc.

One of the most brilliant meteors that has ever been seen in this country shot through the sky last night.

'Has' should be 'have.' 'Meteors' is plural; therefore 'that' is plural; and therefore the verb ought to be plural.

A sojourn of five years in the wilds of Africa have strengthened these opinions.

'Sojourn' is the nominative; it is singular; therefore the verb must be singular.

A box of figs were sent us for Christmas.

'Box' is the nominative to the verb, not 'figs.' We cannot say 'A box were sent.'

The life husband and wife lead influence the children.

For 'influence' read 'influences.'

The negro of the interior is really a better story teller than the Norseman or the Slav have been.

For 'have' read 'has.' Two subjects disjoined by 'or' take a singular verb.

To speak or to write perspicuously or agreeably, with purity, with grace and strength, are attainments of the utmost consequence to all.

For 'are attainments' read 'is an attainment'—singular subjects disjoined by 'or.'

Too great a variety of studies distract the mind.

The nominative to 'distract' is 'variety,' which is singular.

Neither of them are remarkable for precision.

Neither is. Neither is a word with a singular meaning.

And many a holy text around she strews
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

In strict grammar, 'teach' ought to be 'teaches'; but the sense permits the liberty in poetry by what is called 'poetical licence.' It would be inadmissible in prose.

Gerund and Verbal Noun.

Great benefits may be derived from reading of good books.

We must say, either: 'from the reading of good books' or 'from reading good books.'

A wise teacher will avoid the showing any partiality.

Omit the 'the.'

To him death was not so much as lifting of a latch.

Say 'the lifting of.'

He read the parable about sowing of the seed.

Omit the 'of.'

Colloquialisms and Vulgarisms.

Don't it seem strange that father don't write?

DON'T = 'do not'; but we cannot say 'It do not.' Nor can we say 'father do not write.'

I ain't a bit sorry that they ain't coming.

AIN'T = 'am not.' But it is not = 'are not.'

I was made a present of a book.

Say 'I was presented with a book.'

These sort of people are no use.

These (plural) cannot agree with sort (singular). Say 'That sort of person is . . .'

I trained the rest of the way.

'I went the rest of the way by train.'

It does not look like the sun would come out.

For 'like' substitute 'as if.'

In some subjects the maximum of marks will be rarely or ever obtained.

Read 'rarely or never,' or 'rarely if ever.'

'It is me.'

Do you think it was him?

'Him' should be 'he.' The 'it' is in the nominative case to the verb 'was.' The 'it' and the 'him' are identical —that is, they refer to the same person. 'It' is nominative, therefore 'him' must be made nominative.

Is it me you wish to see?

'Me' should be 'I.' 'It' is the nominative to 'is'; the 'it' and the 'me' refer to the same person.

Who do you take me to be?

'Who' should be 'whom.' It is governed by 'take,' and is in a kind of apposition with 'me,' which is an objective.

Mistaken Plurals.

The measles are not commonly a dangerous disease.

'Measles' is a singular noun and ought to have a singular verb. It is a noun like *news, means, mumps, small-pox* (=*pocks*), *pincers*—all of which are singular, though plural in form.

Great pains were taken to preserve secrecy.

'Pains' is a singular noun, though it has a plural form. The verb must therefore be 'was taken.' *Pains* belongs to the same class as *wages, innings, gallows, measles, tidings,* and many others.

The wages of sin are death.

'Are' should be 'is.' 'Wages' is singular.

'A' and 'the' omitted, or inserted unnecessarily.

(*a*) Fire is a better servant than a master.

'The second 'a' is superfluous.

Which of these ribbons do you prefer—the blue or brown?

'The blue or the brown' is right.

A placid river winds between the old and new plantation.

There are two plantations. We must therefore say 'the old and the new plantations.'

(*b*) A rose is my favourite flower.

We should say 'the rose.' 'The' has the power of marking off a class. We say 'the lion,' 'the whale,' when we distinguish these animals from others. And so here, we ought to say 'the rose.'

We will now consider that noble animal, a horse.

Say 'the horse.'

The third and fourth page are to be learned.

Say 'pages.'

I did not think that he was that sort of a boy.

Say 'sort of boy.'

He does not deserve the name of a gentleman.

Say 'name of gentleman'; the 'name of a gentleman' would mean a name that belonged to some (other) gentleman. But here *gentleman* is used as an epithet.

This question interests alike the teacher and pupil.

We ought to say 'the teacher and the pupil.'

(*c*) The society appointed three new officers, a president, secretary, and treasurer.

Say 'a president, a secretary, and a treasurer.'

Mr. Sharpe is the president, and Mr. Carey the secretary and treasurer.

This is right, as the offices of 'secretary and treasurer' are vested in one person.

To these annual festivals came the athlete, soldier, statesman, scholar, and poet.

If these five were one person, the sentence is right. If they were five persons, we ought to repeat the 'the,' and say 'the athlete, the soldier,' etc.

Misplaced Adverbs.

I shall grant what you ask readily.

'Readily' belongs to 'grant,' and should come before it.

People ceased to wonder by degrees.

'By degrees' belongs to 'ceased.' It should begin the sentence.

So utterly was Carthage destroyed that we are unable to point out the place where it stood at the present day.

'At the present day' belongs to 'unable.'

He not only found her employed, but also pleased and tranquil.

'Not only' belongs to 'employed,' and should go with it.

Some day we hope to see you.

'Some day' belongs to 'to see,' and should go as near it as possible.

In merely correcting grammar, the sentence may be left inelegant.

Dislocation. 'Merely' does not belong to 'correcting,' but to 'grammar.'

I have only met him once.

'Only' modifies 'once,' and should come immediately before it.

Wrongly Used Prepositions.

They began to discuss about their plans (omit 'about).

I hold a different opinion to yours (for 'to' say 'from').

Revenge is one of the many weaknesses of which mankind is heir to (omit 'of').

I cannot remember of the occurrence (omit 'of').

The fool contemplated on the results of his foolishness (omit 'on').

God and nature have endowed to him some great gifts (say 'endowed him with').

His reward came in a different manner than what he expected (change 'than' into 'from').

The papers are full with details of the war ('full of,' not 'with').

Wrong Singulars and Plurals.

Several 'Animalculæ' for 'Animalcula.' 'An obnoxious effluvia' for 'effluvium' (*i.e.* 'a nasty smell'). An earthquake is a terrible phenomena (read 'phenomenon'). The phenomena of dreams has only lately received attention ('phenomena have').

Use of Superlative.

The largest circulation of any newspaper.

'Largest' must refer to at least three things. But 'any' includes only one.

Errors in Language.

The river has overflown its banks.

'Overflowed' is the right word.

Miscellaneous Errors.

Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

'Knew' should be 'knew'st.'

Books that we can at a glance carry off what is in them are worse than useless for discipline.

'That' should be 'the contents of which we can,' etc. 'What is in them' is, in this form, superfluous.

He preferred to know the worst than to dream the best.

We cannot say 'preferred than.' It must be 'preferred to.' Say 'to dreaming the best.'

Here is a capital novel, which I am going to sit on the grass and read.

If this sentence is stopped at the word 'sit,' it becomes nonsense. We must recast it into two:—'Here is a . . . I am going to sit . . . and read it.'

Fresh air is the best medicine, which, if more widely known, men would be the better of it.

Say, 'if this fact were more widely known,' etc.

The young and old were alike his friends.

'Young and old' refer to the same persons—which is impossible. We must say 'the young and the old.'

Faulty References.

A man may smoke and drink till he is unable to live without them.

There is no substantive to which 'them' can refer. Say 'without indulging himself in this way.'

Hospitals were first intended for lepers, but, as this dreadful scourge gradually died out, etc.

No scourge has been mentioned. For 'this dreadful scourge' read 'leprosy.'

He was hanged—a well-deserved punishment.

Grammatically wrong, for there is no noun to which 'punishment' can be in apposition. The sentence may be justified on the ground that 'he was hanged' = 'he incurred death by hanging'; and then 'punishment' is in apposition to 'death.'

The air at the equator becoming heated, and rising, cool air rushes in to take its place, and these are called trade-winds.

'These' has nothing to which it can refer. Alter the last clause to 'and thus trade-winds are formed.'

The war between America and Spain was partly carried on by sea; these were of a more terrible nature than the land battles.

'These' refers to nothing. Substitute for it 'the meetings of the navies.'

Double Negatives.

I have not had no sleep all night.

Omit 'not,' or say 'have not had any.'

The mania for speculation now scarcely knew no bounds.

For 'no' read 'any.' The word 'scarcely' contains a negative implication.

The evils which the best-worked poor-law either produces, nor can neither prevent nor cure.

For the last clause read 'or cannot prevent or cure.'

I'll go back there—no, never.

This is not wrong. The double negative here merely gives emphasis.

Not for nobody.

'Not for anybody.'

Vulgarly-Smart Expressions.

These are to be carefully noted for avoidance. Such are—'Terpsichorean trippers' for 'dancers'; 'indite an epistle' for 'write a letter'; 'atmospheric conditions' for 'weather'; 'a crafty wielder of the willow' for 'a clever batsman'; 'per Shanks' nag' for 'on foot'; 'a votary of Bacchus' for 'a man who drinks wine'; 'the light fantastic toe' for 'dancing'; 'a gay and festive individual' for 'a light-hearted man'; 'the locale' for 'the spot where something happens'; 'an eminent personality' for 'a great man'; 'congeners' or 'confrères' for 'associates' or 'brethren'; 'timorous puss' for 'hare'; 'dainty footgear' for 'neat boots'; 'charmingly gowned' for 'prettily dressed'; 'ornithological beings' for 'birds.'

CAUTION.—Many people think that the use of a French, or of some other foreign word adds a grace and smartness to what they write. But never use a foreign word or phrase where an English one will do. Thus steer clear of such words and phrases as—chef d'œuvre (masterpiece), sobriquet (nickname), persona grata (favourite), amour propre (self-love or pride), collaborateur (fellow-worker), be en fête (keep holiday), contretemps (mishap), résumé (abstract or summary), fait accompli (accomplished fact).

General Rules

CHAPTER XXII

GENERAL RULES

1. Vary the length of the sentence. Vary also the form.

'Diversify the sentence-type,' says DR. EARLE. 'The one rule is to be infinitely various.'—R. L. STEVENSON.

2. Never use foreign words or phrases, unless you are compelled to do so.

3. Never begin a sentence—or a clause—with *also*.

4. Let the relative stand as near the antecedent as possible.

5. Qualifying phrases and modifying adverbs should be placed as close as possible to the words they are to qualify or to modify.

6. Let your sentences be always clear to yourself, and ascertain whether they are also clear to others.

7. A participle, being an adjective in function, must always have some noun or pronoun to which it is attached.

8. Avoid such phrases as 'Of all others,' 'than any other.'

'Other two' for 'two more' is a Scotticism.



9. Let there be only one subject in a sentence.

If more than one is required, let its relation to the main subject be quite clear. Or: 'Do not change your nominative.'

10. Avoid tautology.

11. Avoid pleonastic expressions—like 'return back' or 'return back again.'

12. Avoid exaggeration—even in the height (or the depth) of emotion.

13. Avoid such clumsy connectives as *therein*, *thereby*, *whereto*, *whereupon*, *wherefore*, etc. All of these are more or less antiquated.

14. Use as many connectives as you can. Such easy connectives as *again*, *once more*, *on the other hand*, *besides*, give lightness to the composition.

15. Shun clichés.

16. Do not begin your paper with 'The above title,' 'The subject of this paper.'

17. Be careful about the position of the word *only*.

18. Avoid repetition, unless it is really necessary or distinctly telling.

19. Avoid archaic, quaint, or Biblical phrases.

Such phrases are not admissible in ordinary prose.

20. Be clear.

'Care should be taken, not that the reader may understand if he will, but that he must understand, whether he will or not.'—QUINCTILIAN.

21. Be simple. That is, be yourself!

22. Avoid the use of unnecessary adjectives.

23. Do not search for similes or metaphors. If the subject naturally suggests them, they will come of themselves: if they do not, they are better away.

24. Emphasis may be gained by an inversion of the 'natural' order of words. If you employ inversion, recollect that the most striking position in a sentence is the beginning; and the next most emphatic, the end.

25. Be careful to avoid DISLOCATION.

26. Draw up a short skeleton of what you are going to write about.

27. Read your essay aloud, after it is written—either to yourself, or to a friend, or to both.

28. Cut out those words you can do without, provided the sense and the rhythm are not injured by the process.

Short Essays with Mottoes

CHAPTER XXIII

SHORT ESSAYS WITH MOTTOES

SCORN no man's love, tho' of a mean degree;
(Love is a present for a mighty king)
Much less make any one thine enemy,
As guns destroy, so may a little sling.
The cunning workman never doth refuse
The meanest tool that he may chance to use.

G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on BEARING TOWARDS ACQUAINTANCES, with the above lines as a motto.

(i)

PITCH thy behaviour low, thy projects high;
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be:
Sink not in spirit. Who aimeth at the sky,
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.
A grain of glory mixt with humbleness
Cures both a fever and lethargickness.

G. HERBERT.

(ii)

We cannot always succeed; but, if we fail, we can always fail—in good spirits. R. L. STEVENSON.

Write a short essay on SUCCESS and FAILURE; and work into it the ideas in the above passages.

BE useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, good parts, great places are the way
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
To that one joy of doing kindnesses.

G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on SOCIAL VIRTUES; and introduce into it the ideas and the phrases in Herbert's lines.

IN brief, acquit thee bravely; play the man.
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
Defer not the least virtue: life's poor span
Make not an ell, by trifling in thy wo.
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains:
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on PAIN and PLEASURE regarded from Before and from Behind, with the above lines as a text.

BE thrifty, but not covetous; therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get, to live;
Then live, and use it: else it is not true
That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
Makes money not a contemptible stone.

G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on TRUE ECONOMY, and expand the ideas in Herbert's lines.

ENVY not greatness: for thou mak'st thereby
Thyself the worse, and so the distance greater.
Be not thine own worm: yet such jealousy
As hurts not others, but may make thee better,

Is a good spur. Correct thy passions' spite;
Then may the beasts draw thee to happy light.
G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on ENVY and JEALOUSY, and expand Herbert's phrases and ideas. (The 'beasts' are the lower passions, which may be useful in inciting a person to action.)

BE calm in arguing: for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesie.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More than his sicknesses or poverty?
In love I should: but anger is not love,
Nor wisdom neither: therefore gently move.
G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on TEMPER IN DISCUSSION, with the above lines as a motto.

(i)

SUNDAYS observe: think, when the bells do chime,
'Tis Angels' music; therefore come not late.
God then deals blessings: if a king did so,
Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show?
G. HERBERT.

(ii)

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there than thou: for thou art there
Only by His permission. Then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stocking: quit thy state,
All equal are within the Church's gate.
G. HERBERT.

Write a short essay on BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

HEAD AND HEART

(i)

WHEN in ordinary discourse we say a man has a fine head, a long head, or a good head, we express ourselves metaphorically, and speak in relation to his understanding. ADDISON.

(ii)

But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is cured, the soldier will not fight.
TENNYSON (THE PRINCESS).

(iii)

All offences, my lord, come from the heart.
SHAKESPEARE.

(iv)

Kind hearts are more than coronets
And simple faith than Norman blood.
TENNYSON.

(v)

Evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart. HOOD.

Write a short essay on HEAD AND HEART, and introduce some of the above quotations.

THE INEVITABLE WORD

HE hears the music of his heart,
But knows not whence the breath is blown;
It comes from regions far apart,
With power beyond his own.

A presence at his side alights,
A whisper at his ear is heard;
Amazed he takes the pen, and writes
The inevitable word. ALFRED HAYES.

Mr. Fox one night, when talking of a speech of Mr. Pitt's, said: 'I can find words easily, but Mr. Pitt always finds *the* word.'

Write a short essay on THE RIGHT WORD IN PROSE AND IN POETRY, with the above quotations as a text.

A PLEASING form; a firm, yet cautious mind;
Sincere, though prudent; constant, yet resign'd;
Honour unchanged, a principle profess'd,
Fix'd to one side, but moderate to the rest:
An honest courtier, yet a patriot too;
Just to his prince, and to his country true:
Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth:
A generous faith from superstition free;
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny:
Such this man was: who, now from earth removed,
At length enjoys that liberty he loved. POPE.

[The lines above were written by Pope on his friend Sir WILLIAM TRUMBULL.]

Write a short essay on A WELL-BALANCED CHARACTER with these lines as a text.

AVOID extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense:
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify. POPE.

Write an essay on EXTREMES IN APPROVAL AND DISAPPROVAL with the above lines as your text.

BE silent always, when you doubt your sense;
And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence:
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who, if once wrong, would need be always so;
But you, with pleasure, own your errors past,
And make each day a critique on the last. POPE.

Write an essay on OBSTINACY IN ASSERTION with the above lines as your text.

GOOD MANNER AND GOOD MANNERS

'TIS not enough your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;
Men must be taught, as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.
Without good breeding truth is disapproved;
That only makes superior sense beloved. POPE.

Write an essay on KINDLY CONSIDERATION with the above lines as your text.

GOOD TEMPER

O! BLESS'D with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She who can love a sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
She who ne'er answers till a husband cools;
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys;
Spleen, vapours, or small-pox, above them all,
And mistress of herself though china fall.
POPE (MORAL ESSAYS).

Write an essay on GOOD TEMPER with the above lines as a text.

AN OLD BATTLEFIELD

WE travelled in the print of olden wars,
Yet all the land was green,
And love we found, and peace,
Where fire and war had been.

They pass and smile, the children of the wood,
No more the sword they wield;
And oh! how deep the corn
Along the battlefield! STEVENSON.

Write a short essay on AN OLD BATTLEFIELD with the above motto.

Write an essay on WISDOM with the following motto:—

WISDOM is common sense in an uncommon degree.
COLERIDGE.

Write a short essay on THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS with the following motto:—

WHEN thou wishest to give thyself delight, think of the excellences of those who live with thee; for instance, of the energy of one, the modesty of another, the liberal kindness of a third. MARCUS AURELIUS.

Write a short essay on MISCHIEF with the following mottoes:—

(i)

MOST of the mischief in the world would never happen, if men would only be content to sit still in their parlours. PASCAL.

(ii)

All mischief comes from our not being able to be alone: hence gambling, luxury, dissipation, ignorance, calumny, envy, forgetfulness of one's self and of God. PASCAL.

SHE stands, a thousand-wintered tree, By countless morns impearled; Her broad roots coil beneath the sea, Her branches sweep the world; Her seeds, by careless winds conveyed, Clothe the remotest strand With forests from her scatterings made, New nations fostered in her shade, And linking land with land.

O ye by wandering tempest sown 'Neath every alien star, Forget not whence the breath was blown That wafted you afar! For ye are still her ancient seed On younger soil let fall — Children of Britain's island-breed To whom the mother in her need Perchance may one day call.

WILLIAM WATSON.

Write a short essay on THE COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN with the above verses as a motto.

Write a short essay on FAME with the following motto:—

WHAT is celebrity? The advantage of being known to people who don't know you.

Write a short essay on PERSEVERANCE with the following mottoes:—

(i)

BE brave, persevere in the fight, struggle on, do not let go, think magnanimously of man and life, for man is good and life is affluent and fruitful. MORLEY.

(ii)

Bate no jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. MILTON.

Write a short essay on THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE with the following motto:—

WHEN we have deducted all the time that is absorbed in sleep, or appropriated to the other demands of nature, or the inevitable requirements of social intercourse, all that is torn from us by violence of disease, or imperceptibly stolen from us by languor, we may realise of how small a portion of time we are really masters.

DR. JOHNSON.

Illustrate the above essay by a comparison with the planet on which we live. 'After deducting the enormous spaces covered by uninhabitable oceans, by rocky mountains and hills, by barren sands and deserts—scorched by heat or petrified by frost, a very small portion of the surface of the globe is left for the food of man—for fruit and corn, for grass and pasture.'

Vocabulary of Terms

CHAPTER XXIV

VOCABULARY OF TERMS

Abstract for Concrete. Instance: 'the wit and beauty of the town' for 'the clever men and the handsome women.' This is one form of a figure which is sometimes called **Autonomasia.**

Allegory. A description of one thing under the guise of another—a veiled story which ostensibly relates to material things, but which is intended to describe and explain things which are not material. Instances: Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the Parables of the New Testament.

Anacolouthon (Greek *a-*, 'not'; *acolouthon*, 'following'). A want of grammatical sequence, or following. Instance: 'If thou beest he—But, O, how fall'n! how changed!'—'Par. Lost,' i. 84.

Analysis (Greek *ana*, 'back'; *lysis*, 'a loosing'). The unloosing of a sentence, or the breaking of it up into its component parts. Opposed to **Synthesis**, which is the placing together of parts, so as to form a whole.

Anti-climax. See **Climax.**

Antithesis. Contrast—the bringing of contrary ideas or terms into close opposition. Instance: 'The prodigal robs his heir; the miser robs himself.'

Apostrophé. A digressive address—a turning away from the main thread of a discourse or writing, in order to address specially some person or thing, present or absent.

Apposition. (a) In grammar—the placing of one word or

pronoun near another, so as to explain or differentiate it—e.g. 'On him, their second Providence, they hung.' (b) In rhetoric—the addition of a parallel or explanatory word or phrase by way of illustration of another—e.g. 'He was hanged—a well-deserved punishment.'

Asyndeton (Greek *a-*, 'not,' *syndĕton*, 'bound together'). The omission of connectives, whereby sentences are not bound together. Instance: 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.'

Bathos. A descent from the grand or elevated to the commonplace or ludicrous. Instance:

'And thou, Dalhousie, the great god of war,
Lieutenant-Colonel to the Earl of Mar.'

Bathos is a figure closely akin to **Anti-climax** (q.v.).

Clause (L. *claudo*, I shut). A number of words shut up within limits—generally used as the name of one of the minor members of a complex sentence.

Cliché. A hackneyed, stale expression—e.g. 'the light, fantastic toe,' or 'own the soft impeachment.' (The name is taken from small copper or zinc plates sold to publishers.)

Climax. A series of clauses or phrases, so arranged that each in turn surpasses the preceding one in intensity of expression or importance of meaning. Instance:

'Black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell.'

The opposite of Climax is **Anti-climax**, where the intensity of feeling descends, instead of ascending,'—e.g. 'He was a devoted husband, an exemplary parent, an honest man, and a first-rate shot.'

Colon. The word means 'limb': it is the name given to the stop that marks off an important limb of a sentence.

Comma. As the word means a 'section,' it is the name given to the stop that marks off a slightly unimportant section of a sentence.

Complex Sentence is a sentence made up of a principal sentence and one or more subordinate clauses.

Compound Sentence is a sentence made up of two or more co-ordinate principal sentences—i.e. sentences which are each equally important.

Composition. The art of putting together words, rhythmically, to make *sense*. 'The art of varying well.'

Concord. A syntactical agreement between words—e g. an agreement between a verb and its subject.

Concrete for Abstract. Instance: 'grey hairs' for 'age.'

Confusion of Sense will be avoided, if one is clear as to what one is writing about. 'The dog, before it could be killed, bit Mr. Hutton and several other dogs.'

Co-ordinate Sentence. When several sentences are joined by such words as 'and,' 'but,' 'so,' etc., each is called a co-ordinate sentence, because it takes the same rank as the rest.

Correlative. Correlatives are words that go in pairs and are mutually related, one complementing the other. Such are 'neither — nor,' 'both — and,' 'such — as,' etc.

Dislocation. The misplacing of words or clauses. Instance: 'Erected to the memory of John Smith who was shot as a mark of affection by his brother.'

Emphasis (Greek *emphaino*, 'I make clear'). Any mode of expression which makes the meaning clearer and weightier, or a suggestive mode of expression which implies more than would be ordinarily meant by the words used.

Epigram. A pithy and pointed saying—e.g. 'The child is father to the man.'

Euphemism. The use of a mild or indirect expression to cloak a plain or harsh statement—e.g. 'he fell asleep' for 'he died.' To be distinguished from **Euphuism**, which was an affected mode of writing, characterised by the use of fine

words and the abuse of antithesis (fashionable during the Elizabethan era). This latter term comes from the word **Euphues** (=the Fine-natured Man), which was the title of a romance by John Lyly (1533-1606), who wrote in a beautiful, but somewhat strained and affected, style.

Euphony. A harmonious arrangement of sounds in composition.

Exclamation. A form of words used interjectionally to express some sudden emotion—e.g. 'My father's spirit in arms! All is not well.'

Figure of Speech. A peculiar or special use of words; an employment of words in a meaning different from that ordinarily assigned to them.

Hyperbolé. An extravagant statement, not intended to be understood literally—e.g. 'Hell grew darker at his frown.'

Idiom. A phrase or mode of expression which is peculiar to a language, and which does not admit of literal translation into another language. It has often a signification other than its grammatical or logical one. Instance: 'at his finger ends,' 'tooth and nail,' etc.

Interrogation. A figure whereby a direct statement is put into the form of a question—e.g. 'Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, did they live for ever?' 'Where are the snows of yesteryear?' The questions are purely rhetorical, and are not expected to be answered.

Inversion. A change in the natural or recognised order of words, in order to produce effect or emphasis—e.g. 'Silver and gold have I none,' or 'Of all bad qualities, stinginess is one of the most detestable.'

Irony. Covert sarcasm; the use of agreeable or commendatory forms of expression, in order to convey a meaning opposite to that literally expressed. Instance: 'He is full of information, like yesterday's "Times."' There are also

mild kinds of irony—such as gentle raillery, etc. Jane Austen is a master (or mistress) in this art.

Litōtes. A figure by which an affirmative is expressed by the negation of the contrary—e.g. 'a citizen of no mean city'='a citizen of an illustrious city.'

Metaphor (Greek *meta*, 'from one to another,' and *phora*, 'a carrying'). 'The carrying of a relation from one set of objects (or ideas) to another—e.g. of the relation of ploughing from "plough" and "land" to "ship" and "sea"' (Abbott). Metaphor is founded on a real or fancied identity of qualities between the two sets of ideas. Vide also **Simile.**

Mixed Metaphor. An expression in which two or more metaphors are confused. Metaphorical language must be congruous—i.e. descriptive of the same set of ideas, and couched so as to suit them alone. Instance: 'I smell a rat; I see it floating in the air; I must nip it in the bud.'

Metonymy. A figure that consists in substituting the name of one thing for that of another to which the former bears a known and close relation. Thus we say 'the head and heart' for the intellect and affection, 'the bottle' for strong drink, etc.

Onomatopœia. The making of a word to imitate a natural sound. 'Gurgle,' 'hum,' 'crack,' 'buzz,' 'ring,' 'thunder,' etc., are onomatopœic words.

Paraphrase. The restatement of a passage, whereby the sense of the original is given in other words. 'Look before you leap' might be paraphrased into 'Be cautious before taking any important step.'

Parenthesis. An explanatory or qualifying sentence, phrase, or word, which is inserted in a longer passage without being grammatically connected with it. Instance: 'She was here—I know—an hour later.' It is often included within (—).

Personification. A device whereby what is impersonal is endued with a personal character. Instance: 'O Tiber! Father Tiber, to whom the Romans pray.'

Phrase. A mere group of words that express no statement, or question, or command. 'He came' is a sentence; but 'upon his coming' is a phrase.

Pleonasm. The use of more words than are necessary to express an idea—e.g. 'the *entire* monopoly' (monopoly implies entirety).

Precision. Definiteness and accuracy in the use of words. Thus the advertisement, 'Two sisters want washing,' is an instance of a lack of precision.

Proper Name for the Common. Instance: 'a Crœsus' or 'a Rothschild' for 'a rich man'; 'a Kitchener' for 'a great general.' The figure is also called **autonomasia.**

Punctuation (Latin *punctum*, 'a point'). The dividing of a sentence by means of points.

Redundancy. The use of superfluous words. Instance: 'a final conclusion.'

Repetition. The act of repeating the same word or idea. Instance: '(Charity) beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'

Rhythm (Greek *rhythmos*, 'a flowing motion'). The flow of a sentence, produced by (among other things) the alternation of long and short words, and regulated by a trained ear.

Semicolon (L. *semi*, 'half'; Greek, *colon*, 'a limb'). A stop which is half as important as a colon.

Sensuous. Appealing to the senses. Milton says that poetry should be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.'

Sentence. A number of words constituting a whole, so as to express a statement, or a question, or a command. A sentence is either assertive, as 'he is good,' or interrogative, as 'is he good?' or imperative, as 'be good.'

Sequence of Tenses. A rule by which one tense is followed by another according with it. Thus we say, 'he thought it was so,' not, 'he thought it is so.' (Past with past; not past with present.)

Simile. A statement of the likeness between two things in literal terms. Instance: 'Man is like grass.' But to say 'Man is grass' would be a **metaphor**, which is a simile with the word like (or some similar word) omitted.

Solecism (Greek *soloikismos*, 'speaking like the men of Soloi,' a town in Cilicia inhabited by a boorish people[1]). A gross blunder, either in grammar, or in the use of words. Instances: 'I done it' for 'I did it'; 'caparisons are odorous' for 'comparisons are odious.'

Specification. The art of painting a picture in words, so as to bring it vividly before the eye of the mind. Instance: 'Raleigh was executed "on a cold, hoar-frosty morning."'

Split Infinitive. The insertion of a word or words between the 'to' and the infinitive. Instance: 'He was able to easily overcome the difficulty.'

Style. Style is simply manner of writing, which is fixed by nationality, period, the individual character of the writer, and many other things. 'Proper words in proper places makes the true definition of a style' (Swift).

Subordinate clause (L. *sub*, 'beneath,' and *ordo*, 'a rank'). A clause that ranks beneath a principal sentence. Such a clause has the value either of a noun, adjective, or adverb.

Syncŏpé (Greek *syn*, 'completely,' and *kopé*, 'a cutting'). The contraction of a word by cutting out letters, as in ne'er' for 'never.'

Synecdŏché. The putting of a part for the whole. Only the most prominent or most interesting part should be

[1] Probably a fanciful derivation.

selected. Instances: 'Ten sail' for 'ten ships'; 'ten thousand bayonets' for 'ten thousand soldiers'; 'bread' for food in general, etc.

Synonym. A word that has (a) the same or (b) nearly the same meaning as another. Instances: (a) begin and commence; (b) time, period, epoch.

Tautology. The use of several words in the same passage, which convey the same idea—e.g. 'they did it successively one after the other.'

Trope or **tropical phrase** (Greek *tropé*, 'a turning'). A word or phrase that has been turned away from its literal meaning, and used in a figurative manner. Thus we can call a stupid man an ass, or a too shrewd man a fox.

Unity. A combination of parts in writing, such as to constitute an artistic whole.

Variation. The varying of words, and the varying of the structure of sentences, so as to avoid dull monotony.

Verbosity. A tedious and unnecessary piling-up of words.

Vision. The power of vivid realisation—practically identical with **Specification** (q.v.).

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